

Music & Letters

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Edited by

A. H. FOX STRANGWAYS

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Volume XVI

No. 3

EDITORIAL

ON the day of going to press comes news that will gladden all the readers of this magazine. Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams receives, 'greener from the brows' of its former wearer, Sir Edward Elgar, the Order of Merit. We rejoice that music has been thus honoured, and has been placed beside literature as a spiritual force that enriches the world. But more especially are we glad to see the names of these two men who heartily admired each other's creative work, very different in scope and character but alike in spirit and purpose, thus placed together in honour. It is an Order of Modesty as well as of Merit. No one can earn it by doing something; it comes to those who have achieved the quiet position of being somebody. It comes from the King, who knows his people's happiness as well as he knows their sorrows, and in conferring it he has answered their dearest wishes.

And there is another name in the Birthday List in which we have our own special reason for delighting, that of Sir Bruce Richmond. For it was by his advice that this magazine started and with his encouragement that it continued. He is one who hardly knows whether music or letters is his first love. When he quotes passages of Chapman or of Byrom, you think it is letters. When he whistles the second subject of Franck's Prelude Choral and Fugue you know it is music.

AN UNPUBLISHED DRAWING OF GEORG FREDERICH HÄNDEL

THERE has recently come to my attention a noteworthy addition to the iconography⁽¹⁾ of Georg Friedrich Händel: *viz.*, an eighteenth-century drawing,⁽²⁾ executed in red chalk, 12½ in. × 15¾ in., depicting Händel standing, half-left, holding with his left hand the hilt of a sword, and, with his right, a scroll of music; Lisetta or Lisabetta du Parc (called: *La Francescina*) sitting, facing half-right, holds a wreath; a parrot is perched on the chair. This important work is neither signed nor dated. Probably done by a French artist, it will be shown later that it may be attributed to the period, c. 1745.

Especially significant is the fact that this drawing represents the only instance of Händel's appearance in conjunction with another person. A few biographical remarks concerning *La Francescina* will, it is hoped, revive interest in this woman, who probably entered into Händel's private life, more than is generally suspected.

Lisetta du Parc, of French extraction, had sung for some years in Italy, where she acquired her soubriquet.⁽³⁾ She arrived in England at the end of 1736. The *London Daily Post* (November 18, 1736) announced that 'Sga. Merighi, Sga. Chimenti, and La Francescina, had the honour to sing before her majesty, the duke, and the princesses, at Kensington, on Monday night, and met with a most gracious reception. After which, the Francescina performed several dances to the entire satisfaction of the court.'⁽⁴⁾ No public notice of her dancing appears after this time.

Her first appearance as a public singer, and incidentally, the beginning of her long association with Händel took place on January 3, 1738, when she appeared as Clotilda in Händel's opera, *Faramondo*. She seems to have pleased both the composer and the

⁽¹⁾ *v.* the author's article: 'A List of Portraits, Sculptures, etc. of Georg Friedrich Händel,' *MUSIC AND LETTERS*, xiii, 156-67 (London, 1932).

⁽²⁾ Now in the possession of Harry Stone, Esq., 24, East 58th Street, New York, N.Y.; *v. Fig. 1.*

⁽³⁾ *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1908 ed.), ii, 94-95.

⁽⁴⁾ Quoted in Victor Schoelcher's *The Life of Handel*, p. 216 f.n. (New York: Mason Brothers, 1857).



LA FRANCESINA AND HÄNDEL



public, for thereafter she appeared regularly in Händel's works⁽⁵⁾ until 1741, in November of which Händel departed to Ireland to direct, among other of his compositions, the first performance of his oratorio, *The Messiah*.

La Francescina's relations with Händel appear to have ripened into a close friendship, since Burney states that 'now having quitted the opera stage, *she constantly attached herself to Handel*' and 'was the first woman in his oratorios for many years, . . .' ⁽⁶⁾ (the italics are mine).

The only portrait of Lisetta du Parc that has been recorded is a beautiful mezzotint,⁽⁷⁾ the body of which measures 8 in. × 11½ in., by J. Faber, after a painting by George Knapton, and done in 1737. In this half-length portrait in which she appears to be about thirty years old, she is seated holding a volume of music in her left hand, her right, turning a page at the head of which is the title of an aria: 'Ua sei amabile speranza.' Händel's appearance at this time is best represented by a painting done in 1742 by F. Kyte.⁽⁸⁾ Both the Faber mezzotint and the Kyte portrait display marked similarities to our unpublished drawing, with this difference in the case of *La Francescina*: She is now somewhat older and thinner in appearance. As has already been shown, her period of closest association with Händel was 1744-46.⁽⁹⁾ These facts indicate, then, c. 1745 as a logical date for the attribution of our drawing—a truly splendid piece of Händeliania, worthy of a place in any representative collection of musicians' portraits.

J. M. COOPERSMITH.

(5) 1738: *Alessandro Severo, Serse*; 1739: *Saul, Israel in Egypt* (four alien arias being inserted in the latter, especially for *La Francescina*), *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*; 1740: *L'Allegro, Imeneo* (which, after the first performance on the 22nd of November, was 'advertised again for the 29th, but deferred for near a fortnight, on account of the indisposition of Francescina.' (Burney's *A General History of Music* . . . iv, 432; London, 1789); 1741: *Deidamia*, Händel's last opera.

(6) Burney, *op. cit.*, iv, 667. It is known that she sang in *Joseph* (1744) and in *Belshazzar* and *Hercules* (both in 1745). Leichtentritt (*Handel*, p. 208; Stuttgart, 1924) quotes a letter by Rev. William Harris to the effect that, at a rehearsal of the *Occasional Oratorio* on the 7th of February, 1746, which took place at Händel's home in Brook Street, — Reinholt, Beard, and *La Francescina* were Händel's only available soloists.

(7) *v. Fig. 2.*

(8) A coloured reproduction may be seen in Grove, *op. cit.* (1927 ed.), ii, facing p. 506.

(9) *v. supra* f.n. 6.

HANDEL ON THE STAGE.

VICTORIAN England regarded Handel mainly as a composer of Sacred Oratorios. Many of his fervent admirers were completely unaware that he had ever written such things as operas, and those who had any acquaintance with these works were quite firmly convinced that to revive them on the stage would be perfectly impossible. To stage any of the oratorios would have been considered blasphemy. I believe it was Mr. Charles Manners who first had the courage to stage Mendelssohn's *Elijah*; it must have been his manager who wrote to the Cambridge University Musical Society some thirty years ago or more asking if they would provide volunteer singers to strengthen the chorus in it, adding the information that 'the dresses would be becoming and easy to put on.' I am sorry to say that the invitation was declined; some of the older members of the committee were gravely scandalised. But the vogue of Handelian oratorio was dying down before the end of the last century. *Messiah*, *Samson* and *Judas Maccabaeus* still held their own in provincial centres, but the other oratorios were seldom, if ever, performed. Stanford in his early years at Cambridge produced *Hercules*, and about 1900 Dr. Mann gave a performance of *Theodora* at Cambridge; I persuaded the University Musical Society to give *Jephtha* not long afterwards, but it was a dismal failure, and the chorus showed no enthusiasm for it. The new Bach movement was well under way; it had started under Stanford at Cambridge, and the present Oxford Professor was urging it on with all his inspiring energy. Choral societies which had begun by detesting Bach were speedily converted, and to sing Handel became regarded as a sign of utter artistic stagnation. The performance of *Messiah*, whether by the greater choirs or the humbler ones, was kept up more as a religious observance for certain seasons than as the presentation of a work of art.

In this country the one staunch believer in Handel's operas was R. A. Streatfeild; in his book *The Opera* (1907) and still more in his life of Handel (1909) he maintained that Handel's real genius was for the stage. But his enthusiasm found few followers, and except for one or two more or less amateur experiments, Handel's operas are still unknown to opera-goers in England. As far back as 1874



LA FRANCESCINA



Almira had been revived at Hamburg on the occasion of the opening of the new opera-house; otherwise the revival of Handel's operas in Germany dates from 1920, when *Rodelinda* was put on the stage at Göttingen under the direction of Dr. Oskar Hagen. During the next three years further Handel performances took place at Göttingen, the other operas given being *Ottone* and *Giulio Cesare*. In 1922 *Orlando* was performed at a Handel Festival at Halle, the moving spirit being Dr. Hans Joachim Moser, who both translated the libretto and sang a part in the opera. Later on *Ezio* was brought out at Göttingen, but not under Dr. Hagen's direction, as he had by then taken up a professorial post in America. The Handel operas were quickly adopted by many other German theatres, and for a few years they were the outstanding sensation of the German stage, but this enthusiasm was not permanent, and they did not remain in the repertory for long. Occasional performances still take place, and in this particular year 1935 there has naturally been a renewal of interest in Handel; but anyone who studies the weekly bills of the German opera-houses will see that managers are forced to cater for the tastes of a less cultivated public than was available in 1920-3, and classical opera, even in the great cities, has had to yield a considerable place to musical comedy.

Dr. Hagen was not a musician, but a Professor of Fine Art who happened to be a keen musical enthusiast. He seems to have had little or no historical approach to Handel and the opera of Handel's day. Handel's music appealed to him as what Germans call *zeitlos*, independent of any associations with a particular period of history. He visualised the operas with the artistic outlook of his own day, and had no desire to see them staged in the eighteenth-century style. It is evident from the performing editions which he published that the stage picture was vividly prominent in his imagination as he considered the scores. His outlook was fundamentally romantic, or perhaps post-romantic, influenced, I suspect, subconsciously by Böcklin and Stuck, consciously by Appia and Gordon Craig. It was a style of scenery and decoration that well suited the period of performance, especially in an academic environment, for it could be achieved with cheap materials and simple mechanisms. Shakespeare was being put on the stage in much the same fashion; his characters were not to be thought of as belonging to a particular century, or even to Elizabethan times, but as creatures of a fantastic imagination, *zeitlos*, independent of time.

In editing the music, as in translating the librettos, Dr. Hagen unfortunately lacked the necessary musical scholarship. One can see

that his natural musical background was represented mainly by Wagner, and indeed this is the case with the majority even of professional musicians in Germany. Handel had been neglected for so many years, and what little Handel was performed had been so exclusively the property of the church musicians, that the men of the theatre had and have still no conception of his individual style. Their natural instinct is to make Handel sound like Bach and Wagner, as far as such a combination is conceivable. The chief difficulties presented by Handel's operas to the modern producer are (1) the soprano and contralto heroes, (2) the long *da capo* songs, and (3) the *recitativo secco*. As regards the first, parts were transposed for tenors and basses, and the music rewritten where thought necessary in order that it should lie in more effective regions of the voice. As regards the second, the *da capo* was ruthlessly cut, regardless of the sense of the Italian words and regardless of musical form; altogether, the music was chopped up and rearranged to suit the convenience of the stage producer. The recitative was translated into German with no feeling for the style or the rhythm of the original Italian; all was sacrificed to (Wagnerian) 'dramatic effect.' In the accompaniments it is obvious that Dr. Hagen was no harpsichordist; the harmonies which he has written may be perfectly in accordance with the original figured basses, but the groups of chords and the rhythmical figures employed at 'dramatic' moments, especially when interpreted in the light of Dr. Hagen's expression marks and directions, show quite clearly that they were conceived by someone accustomed to play Wagner's operas (and with vigorous enthusiasm) on a modern grand pianoforte.

The translations romanticise the words wherever possible, though I daresay the translator may have been quite unconscious of his own romanticism. In many of the songs the German words must be extremely difficult to sing. Handel (and his Italian poets too) knew well the value of energetic declamation, and often wrote songs where words have to be sung with both rapidity and force, as for example in Cæsar's song in a swift dactylic metre :

Al lampo dell' armi quest' alma guerriera vendetta farà.

This long line has to be sung to a continuous phrase of quavers and semiquavers, one note to a syllable in an *allegro* movement; it is the kind of melody that occurs frequently in the earlier operas of Scarlatti. Dr. Hagen translates it thus (I quote a longer excerpt in order to show the difficult combinations of consonants) :

Ein Ritter in Waffen verteidigt sein Leben mit funkelnder Wehr,
Er fürchtet nicht Feinde, nicht feige Verräter, er traut seiner
Kraft, er traut seinem Schwert!
Ich will sie zerschmettern (*bis*) mit funkelnder Wehr.

The German language is in itself unfriendly towards *legato* singing, and the general tendency of German singers brought up on Wagner and Strauss (especially male singers) is to exaggerate the disruptive qualities of it. Handel composed his operas for some of the greatest singers who ever lived, and his music can only be rightly interpreted by those who have some understanding of what real singing is.

I have to confess that the few Handel operas (about half a dozen) which I have seen in Germany were all given in minor theatres on the occasion of some special Handel Festival, with the exception of *Serse*, which I saw once at Dresden in the course of an ordinary season. *Serse* was cut down to one act, and I must admit that I found it completely unintelligible, not having studied either score or libretto previously. The other Festival performances suffered from being given with inferior singers and economical scenery and dresses. In the early years of the movement it was apparently impossible to obtain first-rate opera singers for Handel, partly on grounds of expense, and partly because no opera singers had had any training in that kind of music. The chief singers were therefore oratorio singers, who had no experience of the stage; the result was not very encouraging. After the departure of Dr. Hagen for America the Göttingen Festivals were directed by Dr. Hanns Niedecken-Gebhard, who is one of the finest general opera producers in Germany, with an enormous experience of operatic production of all kinds. His first attempt at solving the Handelian problem was to make as much use as possible of the ballet, and during any song that the audience might be inclined to think dull a few dancers or supers were made to carry out some more entertaining movements. The worst feature of the Festival performances was the prominence given to a certain elderly oratorio singer who was regarded as a specialist on old music; his voice and style were painful in the extreme, and he was hardly a suitable representative of youthful heroes.

The best Handel performance that I saw was that of *Ottone* given at Halle during the Handel Celebration of last February; Dr. Niedecken-Gebhard was the producer, the singers were mostly very adequate and the scenery was picturesque and effective. In the earlier performances of Handel there were two divergent points of view as to the general principle of decoration and production; one party wished to be *zeitlos* in the manner of Dr. Hagen, depending on

vague draperies and scenery in planes, while the other aimed at presenting the operas in something like the decorations of Handel's own day. On one occasion a special matinée of *Rodelinda* was given in the old palace theatre at Ludwigsburg, the Versailles of Stuttgart; this little theatre has remained almost unaltered since the eighteenth century and still has the old mechanism for shifting the wings by means of a winch under the stage. Some genuine old scenery was used, and the whole lit by candles. I am sorry that I did not see it, for it must have been a most interesting experiment.

The baroque style has been very much in fashion in Germany for some years, and baroque-classical costumes are certainly most appropriate for Handel; but the baroque method has its drawbacks. It is very expensive to put on, and it needs great artistic skill to make it convincing. It appeals very strongly to the type of spectator who is not quite sure whether to be emotionally stirred or to be moved to laughter; it is reassuring to the manager, for he knows that he is on the safe side whichever view his audience may take. But it will do for one opera only. A manager may include two or three operas by Mozart or Wagner in the repertory of one season; but if two or three operas by Handel are produced, and all in the baroque style, the audience is naturally tempted to say that one Handel opera is just the same as another.

The Halle performance of *Ottone* was marred by another error of judgment characteristic of Dr. Hagen's amateurism. Between the last two scenes a *concerto grosso* of Handel was played as an *entr'acte*. Considered as a piece of music, it was one of Handel's loveliest works, but it was entirely out of place here; it seemed inappropriate the moment it began. It was entirely different in style from the music of the opera; it could only have been chosen by a man who thought that all Handel's music was much the same. The moment it began the orchestra took on a different colour and style; it was evident that this work had been much more carefully rehearsed than the rest of the opera. We were at once transported to the modern concert room in which Handel is made to sound as sonorous as if he belonged to the nineteenth century; the concerto had become a conductor's show piece. I could feel at once the change of temper in the attention of the audience; this interpolation made the opera a conductor's affair, like the interpolation of the *Leonora* overture between the final scenes of *Fidelio*, and the result was that the final scene fell rather flat because the audience had had their minds distracted in a totally wrong direction of feeling and attention. They could not refocus their minds on the stage; the opera had been for-

gotten, because the opera was something remote and unfamiliar, whereas the concerto made the direct appeal of ordinary concert music, and when the curtain rose again, the connexion with the previous scenes had been broken beyond repair.

If we ever attempt a serious professional performance of Handel's operas in England—not as an isolated academic experiment, but as part of the normal operatic repertory, I hope the organisers of it will start fresh from the original libretto and score, and not merely take over something that has been done in Germany. They will have to wrestle with some of the same problems, but they will have to solve them in a different way for English audiences.

The first problem is that of the voices. Handel's heroic parts were written for *castrati*, generally sopranos, occasionally contraltos. If we transpose these parts for tenors and basses we shall find ourselves in new difficulties. Sometimes the hero is a soprano and the heroine a contralto; if they sing a duet the voices will be in inverted positions. In the few cases that there are of trios or quartets this inversion makes worse confusion. These difficulties can sometimes be overcome by judicious rearrangement; what cannot be overcome is the relation of the voices of the whole cast to one another. We of to-day like our heroes to be tenors; in Handel's day tenors were generally villains or sometimes old men—basses and baritones are rare. If we transpose the *castrato* parts we may find the hero become less brilliant and heroic than the old man or the villain. There is the further difficulty of the *coloratura*; our modern male singers are not very good at *coloratura*, though perhaps they might be induced to practice this art.

In the early performances of Handel's operas under his own direction there are cases of male soprano parts having been sung by women. This may have been done because of a difficulty in obtaining *castrati* in England. I find that during the first thirty years of the eighteenth century a fair number of male parts were sung by women at the Venetian opera-houses, where there can hardly have been a shortage of *castrati*; but on analysing these cases (as far as is possible to do so without knowing the libretti)⁽¹⁾ I find that a good many must probably have been comic parts, such as pages, and that many others were obviously secondary parts. There are, however, a certain number of indisputably heroic parts sung by singers of well-known fame, such as Vittoria Tesi; in such cases I conjecture that these ladies, like Sarah Bernhardt and other great actresses, liked occasionally to exhibit themselves in male parts as a change from the eternal feminine.

⁽¹⁾ I take my information from the casts printed in Taddeo Wiel's catalogue of operas performed at Venice during the eighteenth century.

In Italian comic opera of the period it was very usual for women to sing the male soprano parts. We should therefore be justified, in a modern performance, in giving the male soprano parts of Handel's operas to women singers, since *castrati* are no longer available; but whether audiences would find this acceptable is another matter. Up to about 1900 or so the public seems to have accepted women in certain operatic male parts without question; but latterly a change in taste has become apparent. Mozart's Cherubino is still tolerated, but many people dislike Strauss's Octavian, and I have often heard people express the wish that Gluck's Orpheus and Gounod's Siebel could be sung by men.

As regards the long series of *da capo* songs it would be hasty to condemn them wholesale. The people who complain of the tedious repetition have in all probability had little opportunity of hearing Handel's songs; the composer who has bored them is much more likely to have been Bach, whose *da capo* songs were not written for the theatre, were not often well written for the human voice, and are often much longer than Handel's. To condemn Handel for being conventional is sheer nonsense. Handel wrote his music in the forms of his period, and experience shows us all that a reasonably educated audience can enjoy music of any period from about 1500 onwards, regardless of its conventions, provided that the music is intrinsically convincing. Music in a conventional form (and all music, of all periods, is written in some sort of conventional form) is only tedious when it is badly written and devoid of real feeling or beauty. If a piece of music can grip the attention, an audience will always tolerate both its convention (which it probably does not notice, and indeed subconsciously enjoys) and the holding up of the stage action; the Intermezzo of *Cavalleria Rusticana* is a classical example. What songs could be more conventional than those of Mozart's and Verdi's operas? There are several cases of *da capo* in the songs of Tchaikovsky's *Eugène Onegin*; but if they are well sung, they hold their audience thrilled.

One would like to suppose that English singers, most of whom have at some time sung in Handel's oratorios, would naturally be able to interpret his operas. But the operas require an intenser concentration of feeling and expression to make them convincing. The best of the opera songs have a deeper emotion than those of the oratorios. Many readers may refuse to accept this opinion, even if they have some acquaintance with the scores of the operas. The reason is, I think, that to most people the Biblical words of *Messiah* and even the familiar words of many songs in *Judas* and *Samson* necessarily make a quicker

and more immediate appeal to the emotions than Handel's music does, vivid as the emotion of that music may be. The familiar words guide the emotion of both audience and singers, and most people think of emotional expression in music as a matter of single words or short motives, rather than of the long melodic line of a whole phrase or indeed of a whole song. It is the mark of the very greatest singers—Patti, Melba, Johannes Messchaert—to be able to present a whole song as one unbroken and perfectly shaped melodic line. That is what Handel's opera songs require, if their full intensity of expression is to be realised.

There remains the further and most difficult problem of those extempore (or apparently extempore) ornaments which were always added to the songs by the singers of Handel's day. They were considered indispensable in those days, and it was very largely by the style of those ornaments that contemporary criticism assessed the merits of a singer. The tradition of them has been lost; it may be well to remind the antiquarianly-minded reader that there never was a fixed tradition, and that the style of ornament varied considerably during even the comparatively short period of Handel's operatic career. In Germany attempts have been made both by researchers and by singers to reconstruct these ornaments, but I cannot find the results satisfactory or convincing. It might be possible to produce something better, but I think that could hardly be done until musicians in general had become as familiar with Handel's operas as they are with those of Mozart.

The loss of the ornaments might be considered a good excuse for cutting the *da capos*; a more valid reason for shortening the songs lies in the length of the operas as a whole; for cuts of some kind may be necessary in order to keep the operas within the normal time-limits of a London theatre that cannot ask its audiences to arrive before its usual hour of beginning. If a Handel song has to be shortened, the operation must be performed with due consideration for its anatomy, and for this purpose it is advisable to consider the history of the *da capo* form.

We may distinguish three types of *da capo* song, as represented by Monteverdi, Scarlatti and Handel. Monteverdi's type may be analysed thus :

A	X	A	Y	A
Refrain	Recitative	Refrain	Recitative	Refrain etc.

In this type the refrain, which is lyrical and more sung than spoken,

is quite short, perhaps not more than a single musical phrase; the recitative, which is spoken rather than sung, may be of any length.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century we get the Scarlatti type (standardised by Scarlatti, but not invented by him) :

A

First section, a short but complete piece of music, often preceded by an instrumental prelude.

X

In some cases pure recitative; in others lyrical, modulating to a new key, generally minor if the song is in major and *vice versa*.

A

Repetition often followed by an entirely new and fuller instrumental *ritor-nello*.

Note that the first part, in Scarlatti, is generally too short to be divisible into definite sections; it is based on one subject only. The second part (X) is in some cases a sort of development section on motives from A; in any case it generally suggests a deeper intensity of feeling, or in some cases calm after storm. Only in rare cases is the second part written in a different tempo with a different time-signature.

The type represented by Scarlatti's immediate followers, a type which he himself had foreshadowed in some of his cantatas, is much more developed :

A

Definite binary form with two separable subjects, and with instrumental passages at beginning, at the end of exposition and at the end.

X

Often in a sharply contrasting tempo with different time-signature (*e.g.*, A in major key, *allegro*, C, and X in minor, *andante*, 3/8). Emotion noticeably deeper.

A

Repeated exactly, but no doubt with new vocal ornaments.

Section A requires more detailed analysis :

Exposition

Instrumental introduction. First subject in tonic. Second subject in dominant (in minor keys, in relative major). Instrumental coda ending in dominant.

Recapitulation

First subject starting in dominant (or relative major) but treated differently, and more like a development, in order to modulate back to Second subject in tonic. Instrumental coda, ending in tonic.

The different treatment of the two subjects in the recapitulation is made necessary (1) because the modulation has to be reversed (dominant to tonic instead of tonic to dominant) and (2) because the two subjects when transposed will not lie in convenient parts of the singer's voice. Inferior composers often made a very clumsy job of

this; Handel and Mozart saw that the expressive value of the subjects could be intensified by treating the first subject as a development section, and by altering the second so as to make it vocally more effective.

It is a great mistake to suppose that all *da capo* songs are exactly alike; they show an immense variety, although they may be, and were regularly, classified under five or six standard types. In planning possible cuts, we must therefore consider each song on its own individual merits. In some cases we may find that the X section does not contribute much that is new; in that case we may cut both X and the repeat of A. But if X is obviously of great dramatic importance, it cannot be cut. In a few cases it may be advisable to cut both the A sections, leaving X alone; but this will very rarely be required, and even then is not always possible.

The usual practice of oratorio conductors is to perform A and X, and then repeat the instrumental introduction (or sometimes the instrumental coda) to A, omitting the vocal part of A altogether. This may be tolerable in Bach's sacred music, but not in Handel's operas. Bach's music being written for performance as part of a church service, the repetition of the instrumental *ritornello* may produce an effect of retrospective contemplation which devout listeners may find appropriate. In an opera we cannot do with retrospective contemplation; the opera has to move continuously forward. The singer is on the stage, what is she to do during this *ritornello*? As a matter of fact she almost invariably has to make her exit after singing a song. Normally, the final *ritornello* will give her time to do so, perhaps to acknowledge her applause as well; but she will not get her applause unless she ends her song with the proper *cadenza* and cadence in the right key, as Handel meant her to do. Song is her existence; the orchestra may play what it likes, but if she is not singing, she is as good as not there, and if she is to sing, she must sing musical sense, and end the song in the right key, herself.

There are a few very rare cases in which Handel himself has dispensed with the *da capo* after X, but he does this only for violent dramatic effect. He can only make this violent effect by deliberately smashing a rule; and I need hardly point out that the effect of the smash is inversely proportionate to its frequency of recurrence. Handel may take this liberty, but I do not think his arrangers ought to claim the right to it.

When the Cambridge University Musical Society performed *Semele* on the stage in 1925 I designed what I then believed was an entirely new way of shortening Handel's songs; quite recently I discovered

that Handel had done it himself. Read through the first part (A) of the song, and find out where the music comes to rest in the dominant (or relative major) at the end of the exposition; it may be at the end of the voice part, or at the end of the following instrumental coda. Then go straight on to section X; in many cases the join can be made without difficulty, but in others a little adjustment may be necessary. At the end of X join up again at the same place in the middle of A—that is, just before the beginning of the recapitulation. Here again adjustment may or may not be necessary; sometimes it may be better to shorten X. In the X section we often find a phrase near the end making what appears to be a final close in a certain key; then the phrase is repeated more or less, but made to end in another key, perhaps the dominant or subdominant of the one just reached. In such cases it may be useful to omit the last modulation.

I do not say that this method of shortening will be feasible in every song of Handel's, but it certainly has been satisfactory in a good many, so that it is at least worth considering as a possibility. The advantage of it is that it saves the whole of the music (apart from negligible cuts), avoids the loss of time spent on the *da capo*, and at the same time preserves the illusion of a *da capo* and makes the song end at the right place.

If Handel's operas are to be performed in England in the course of the ordinary repertory, they must be sung in English, and this brings us to the problem of translation, which is difficult. The usual view of Handel's operas is that they consist of a string of showy *da capo* songs interrupted by pages of dreary recitative, and that the plots are absurd and incomprehensible. I admit that even if one knows Italian fairly well the operatic language of that period is not always easy to understand. It has its own idioms and mannerisms, and more than that, the drama has its own conventions and its own—to us very curious—outlook on life. Handel's librettos are mostly adaptations by Haym or Rolli of older Italian librettos which had been used by other composers some ten or twenty years before, generally at Venice. *Siroe*, *Poro* (*Alessandro nelle Indie*) and *Ezio* are the only ones by Metastasio, whose career as a writer of dramas for music did not begin until 1724. *Siroe* had already been set to music by Leonardo Vinci in 1726, two years before Handel made use of it. From a purely literary point of view the others are of no great distinction, but they are typical work of their period and must be allowed a certain amount of respect.

This is particularly important as regards the recitatives. The accompanied recitatives of Handel are always masterly, and the words

of them are generally on a high level. Against *secco* recitative there is a widespread prejudice, due partly to the general ignorance of Italian, and still more to the tedious way in which the oratorio recitatives are habitually sung by English singers. In the operas recitative must be treated as dramatic dialogue; it requires intelligence, not reverence. The contrast between *secco* and *accompagnato* is (and in the oratorios too) a vital distinction; the change implies a complete change of mood, such as a producer would very likely suggest by a change of lighting. Despite the traditions of Lindley and Dragonetti we must never attempt to orchestrate the *secco*; it must be accompanied by the harpsichord. Fortunately English musicians are far more at home on the harpsichord than the Germans, and old harpsichords of suitable resonance are available here, instead of the very ineffective modern instruments recently manufactured in Germany.

The study of eighteenth century opera, pursued not merely in the library, but in the theatre too, from the viewpoint of a spectator and in a few cases of a translator, has led me to the conclusion that recitative, whether of Handel, Gluck, Mozart or Spontini, is by no means negligible and tedious, but was intended to be heard with close attention and quick understanding. When the Misses Radford performed *La Clemenza di Tito* in London with their company from Falmouth, I fully expected to be completely bored by the *secco* recitatives, which are supposed to be by Süssmayr and not by Mozart; but when I heard them, I found certain scenes of recitative to be the most thrilling moments of the whole opera. In 1933 I saw a memorable performance of *La Vestale* at Florence which convinced me of the beauty and dramatic grandeur of that neglected work. But magnificent as the performance was, it was a little let down by the recitatives (in this case all accompanied, very much in the style of Gluck), because in an Italian translation, recited by singers who were more interested in their arias, it lost the strength and vitality of the original French. It was however at once evident to me that Spontini's original Paris audience in 1807 must have followed the recitative with breathless interest. We can understand this attitude ourselves when we see *Don Giovanni* or *Così fan tutte*.

Handel's operas often contain recitatives chopped up into short quick phrases and exclamations distributed among three or four people. These must follow on each other rhythmically, like a piece of music; it must never be forgotten that recitative is drama, poetry and music too, and must make a continuous rhythmical whole, subject to such accelerations and retardations of *tempo* as may be suitable. This struck

me very forcibly when listening to Handel operas in Germany, for neither translator, singers, accompanists nor conductors seemed to have any conception of the recitatives as poetry and music. They may have sounded 'dramatic' in the ordinary theatrical way, but they were never beautiful; and whatever other composers may have done, Handel always achieved his dramatic and emotional effects by supreme musical beauty. The right approach to Handel—and to Mozart too—is to learn first to understand the beauty of his melody as pure music, cold-bloodedly, if need be, and regardless of what is commonly understood by 'expression,' though always bearing in mind the sense and the metre of the words. Expression must be studied later. As we realise more and more inwardly the beauty of Handel's line, interpretation will take on warmth of itself and the melody will suggest its own expression. What Handel's own singers put in as 'expression' was not the gulps and snorts beloved of those who sing Puccini and Wagner, but the ornamental graces of which we, alas, have lost the secret. Perhaps, if we studied Handel long enough in the right way—forgetting that Bach ever existed, and remembering only the old Italians who preceded Handel—we might eventually rediscover them.

Another problem remains to be considered, that of Handel's orchestra. During recent years there has been a deplorable fashion of re-orchestrating Handel, especially in his concert music. Handel knew quite well how to write for the orchestra, and assumed that his own players knew how to play his music. In presenting Handel to a modern audience a conductor must bear in mind that Handel's audiences had a far more intense feeling for melody than we have as a rule. It is very seldom that even our best orchestral players can make an ordinary melody *sing* in the way that Italian players do.

It would take too long to analyse the causes of this. The remedy is not so much a matter of feeling, as a matter of instrumental technique; that I have learned from Scherchen's book on conducting. For the interpretation of Handel we need a far more tense concentration on melody; it is by melody (which includes counterpoint) that Handel chiefly expresses himself. At the same time we must not forget that to his own audiences it was his daring and complex harmonies that often startled and bewildered them. But those daring harmonies do not occur in every bar; Handel reserves them for important moments, and we have to play these accompaniments in such a way that those harmonies should still surprise and overwhelm the ear, although when we analyse them they are progressions such as might occur in any bar of Mendelssohn. Their value lies not in the harmonies themselves, but in the place where Handel puts them;

that is the real secret of musical form—to put the expressive note in the expressive place.

Handel's scores often look thin. One reason is because he feels melody so intensely (like Berlioz) that ordinary harmony is superfluous to it; another is that he regarded 'harmony'—ordinary filling-up harmony, apart from 'expressive' harmony, or harmony as a dramatic colour effect (as in his *tremolandos* for the string orchestra)—to be the function of the neutral-tinted harpsichord. Let no conductor be frightened of the harpsichord; a good instrument will always do its duty if properly played. A harpsichord solo recital, even by some celebrated player, may easily become monotonous and wearisome. But one can sit through a whole oratorio of Handel or opera of Purcell without ever feeling tired of the harpsichord. It is the *indispensable* foundation of all instrumental music from about 1600 to 1750; such music is positively incomplete without it. For music of this period it is far less wearisome than the pianoforte or the organ; it can accompany every shade of emotion in a recitative without ever being obtrusive and it can add something of value—a certain rhythmic impulse and a certain quality, like varnish on an oil painting—to the full *tutti*. It is the one instrument which throughout a long work of Handel or Purcell always sounds perfectly natural and in its place; it is like the spirit of the composer, a presence of which we are perpetually aware, though we hardly know how we perceive it.

A Handelian conductor must resign himself to being an accompanist, and not a dictator. I fear this is asking too much from the conductors of to-day. Handel was notoriously dictatorial himself, but when he produced his own operas he did not 'conduct,' he sat at the harpsichord where he could be really helpful to others.

EDWARD J. DENT.

THE VIOLIN MUSIC OF HANDEL AND BACH

'Le Style c'est l'homme.' The direct sense of the saying is too clear for comment. But in our easy belief that style is the expression of individuality we sometimes forget that the individual is included in the style of the period and that its general characteristics may be mistaken for his particular features. 'Handel in his bigger things is really very like Bach,' as a lady kindly said not long ago when listening to a Handel Commemoration Concert. In a way she was right : Handel and Bach were the consummate representatives of the music of their age. But they were also tremendously 'individual,' and the better one knows their work, the more vividly this becomes apparent.

Both Bach and Handel began to learn the violin when young, but Bach, I think, had the better start. His father, Johann Ambrosius Bach, was a professional violinist, and naturally gave his son a finer grounding than Handel got from Zachow, organist of the Lutheran Church at Halle. Also, if the scanty evidence can be trusted, Bach began his studies at least a year or two ahead of Handel. This put the latter at some disadvantage. A child must start the violin before the hands get set, if a good tone and technique are to be acquired. Handel, I suspect, regarded his violin simply as a convenient resource. It was so in the summer of 1703. Having launched himself upon the brilliant musical world of Hamburg, a means of existence became necessary. Mattheson, a new friend, got him a job among the second violins of Keiser's famous orchestra. Apparently Handel did not make a great fist of it, for Mattheson says Handel ' behaved as if he could not count five, being naturally inclined to a dry humour . . . but once when the harpsichord player failed to appear, he allowed himself to be persuaded to take his place, and showed himself a man —a thing no one had before suspected save I alone.'

Whether he had composed anything for solo violin up to this point is doubtful. If he did, it has been lost.

In default of solo violin music during this time, we must turn to Handel's orchestral work for enlightenment. We can get it by looking at the score of *Almira*, his most successful opera, composed and produced at Hamburg in 1704. His violin parts are straight,

forward, rather square, stiffly scored and thoroughly German; the phrases and their treatment have that Hamburg touch one knows from Bach. Indeed, *Almira* is often comically akin to early Bach, and I find myself wondering whether both men (for Bach had visited Hamburg in 1702) got the idiom from old Reinken, organist of St. Catherine's Church, or from Keiser.

Up to 1707, Handel, though acquainted with good orchestral playing, had probably never heard a first-rate solo violinist. His journey to Italy brought him straight into contact with Corelli. How eagerly one looks to see the effect! Handel, the unimpressionable, was impressed! For the first and last time in his life a violinist swayed him, and his whole feeling for violin music deepened. No doubt the change was part of the wider change wrought by Italian art upon Handel's magnificent young mind. His virile nature had a strange streak of opportunism—Italian music was paramount and Handel ranged himself naturally in its ascendant position. His reactions can be gauged by the expansion, the new pliancy and picturesqueness of his own style in the oratorio 'La Resurrezione,' written for Prince Ruspoli in 1708. The first performance took place on Easter Sunday, April 8, Corelli leading the band. Even now one can imagine the thrill of that beginning—the passionate Recitative for Lucifer and the Air following, in which the Fallen Angel and all the violins unisono weave a fierce melody in counterpoint above the bass. Later, in the soprano solos for the Angel (of the Resurrection), the violins are used with great beauty, sometimes in unison, sometimes with one solo, and once divided into four—a vague foreshadowing of Wagner's scoring. Then, after a dialogue with the Angel, Lucifer evidently determines to do his damnedest, and Handel, already well in the mood of Beelzebub, the Prince of Devils, leaps forward with a remarkable air for Lucifer, unisono violins and bass, written mainly in unison and octaves, except when the strings tear up or down in terrible black scale rushes. The music goes at such a pace that it would have been impossible to articulate the scales sharply with an orchestra. Here again Handel foreshadows Wagner's treatment of the strings in 'Siegfried'!

Handel thought out 'La Resurrezione' with close poetic intention. Sometimes his poetry is baroque, as when he starts the Angel's utterances on high notes and lets them descend; at others it is touching, as when he silences the continuo and lets only two flutes and a viola da Gamba accompany a Recitative and Air for Maddalena. Handel's sensitivity to fine shades of string tone shows in his direction—at the end of an air for Lucifer with two solo violins—that in the

Da Capo the violins are to reverse. He is quite right. Unlike two pianos, there is always a delicate, living difference between two violins, and some of the loveliest effects in eighteenth century music were obtained by such means. The Concerto Grosso, with its solo and ripieno instruments, was an expression of that principle. Handel, in fact, did employ solo instruments, Concerto Grosso, and four-part chorus in the finale of his '*Resurrezione*'.

So much for Handel's debt to Corelli. What of their personal contacts? Everyone knows the story of Corelli's failing to play at sight a difficult passage in the overture to Handel's '*Trionfo del Tempo*'—Handel snatching the violin from Corelli to show him how it went (I cannot imagine how Handel had the technique, except that he knew exactly what he intended!) and Corelli's mild and courteous reply. But '*La Resurrezione*', which is not so well known, throws a curious little side light on their relations. In Maddalena's solo, '*Hò un non sò che nel cor*', Handel has used almost note for note the theme of Corelli's famous Gavotte from Sonata X of *Opera Quinta*—that very Gavotte for Violin which Tartini took as the theme for his Variations. In a solo for Lucifer Handel also employs a bass of alternating sixths and sevenths strongly resembling the Gavotte in Sonata IV. Of course, these borrowings may have been intended as homage to Corelli, but if so, why assign them to Maddalena and Lucifer, when dear Arcangelo Corelli could have figured as his own name-sake, or S. Giovanni, or the disciple Cleofe. I wonder . . .

It was many years after Handel left Italy that his own Six (and only) Sonatas for Violin with a thorough Bass for Harpsichord or Bass Violin were published. The date of composition is unknown. Chrysander thought all Handel's chamber music dated from his earliest period, and that even 'the few pieces which were written later in London attach themselves in their forms and style to the earlier ones!' However that may be, the Violin Sonatas were issued along with several for Flute and Bass in a collection at Amsterdam about 1724 and shortly afterwards by John Walsh in London. Streatfeild says: 'The violin sonatas were very likely written for Dubourg, who played Handel's music at Concerts (in London) as early as 1719, or perhaps for the Prince of Wales, who took lessons from Dubourg about 1730.' On the showing of Streatfeild's dates it seems possible that the two sets of Trios for various instruments, which Handel published in 1733 and 1739, were designed for the August Pupil. The violin parts of the latter are distinctly less difficult, several of the movements are adaptations of Handel's own works (the Overtures to *Esther* and *Athaliah*, and a theme from one of the

Chandos Anthems) and there is an air of discretion suggesting amateur rather than professional performance. Streatfeild finds that many of the Trios are of singular beauty and expressive power. To be honest, I can only feel them to be average Handel, and so many of the Sonatas are in G minor that the key grows monotonous as a grey north-easter, while the subject matter is exasperatingly consistent.

Interest is intrigued, however, by three unpublished Trio Sonatas, said to be by Handel, which exist beside some known Handel works, in an eighteenth century manuscript volume formerly in the Library of the Sacred Harmonic Society and now in that of the Royal College of Music. They have a right Handelian ring, and some of the movements are very attractive, . . . despite one Sonata being in G minor!⁽¹⁾

The Six Solo Violin Sonatas are technically more difficult, and show every sign of having been written for a fine player. I like to think he was Matthew Dubourg, the pupil of Geminiani, and therefore the grandson in music of Corelli. Handel certainly followed the pure Corellian form and method in these compositions. They show even the same tacit avoidance of the G string, and of any notes above the third position. The G minor and F major Sonatas are the least interesting; the E major Sonata has exquisite serenity and grace, the two A major Sonatas are splendidly vigorous and brilliant, and the D major Sonata is biggest of all—a work to send one along life's way rejoicing. With what a striding phrase it opens—*Maestoso*—a phrase already used by Handel in a weaker guise for one of his flute sonatas; and the fugal *Allegro*—with what a fine rolling subject if starts off. Handel himself evidently thought that subject big enough for better things and used it later in *Solomon* for the chorus 'Live for ever, pious David's son.' The free fugue in the Violin Sonata is developed with ceremonial brilliance, and leads to a *Larghetto* that is quite lovely. Finally comes an *Allegro*, driven along under tremendous pressure of dotted notes and a rhythm that is extraordinarily propelling.

There is a Sonata à 5 (c. 1710) by Handel, which is, in effect, a Concerto in B flat for Violin, with band parts for strings, two oboes and cembalo. The solo violin, in its independence, display, and two lightly accompanied Cadenzas, probably represents the limit of Handel's views on virtuosity. He did not approve of players who extemporised long cadenzas; his remark, 'Welcome home,

(1) Note.—To Mr. Rupert Erlebach (who is realising the continuo) I am indebted for directing my attention to these Trio Sonatas.

Mr. Dubourg,' to the latter after an interminable improvisation, has become classic.

Why the Concerto-Sonata in B flat is so little known I cannot imagine. It is to be found in Vol. 21 of the German Handelgesellschaft edition.

Handel's treatment of strings can be seen in fullest splendour in his 'Twelve Grand Concertos for Violins, etc., in seven parts,' composed during September and October, 1739. Here Handel is magnificently aware of the varieties of colour obtainable from strings, even though there is not a marked difference in texture between his concerto and ripieno parts. The Concertos are superb in their vitality. If the opening bars of No. 10, the great D minor Concerto, were set alongside the opening bars of Corelli's D major Concerto, Opera 3, for the same instruments, they would furnish almost absurdly true self-portraits of the men—Corelli, urbane and dignified; Handel, like Jupiter launching a thunderbolt.

I cannot pass on to Bach without reminding readers that in the most divinely beautiful Aria of Handel's most inspired masterpiece, it is to the unison violins that he allots, in conjunction with the soprano voice, the great melody of 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' With what inexpressible tenderness and comfort Handel here uses the tones of the G string. Surely by now he had come to love the violin.

Bach must have loved the violin from the first, and he more than once earned his living in partnership with it. When Concertmeister at Weimar, he was in the middle of Chamber music, and the period from 1708 to 1717 is coloured with violin associations. It was then that Bach made his many transcriptions and arrangements of Vivaldi's concertos—Vivaldi, the Venetian violinist, whose sense of harmonic form may well have supplied the answer to some questions with which Bach was then grappling. Corelli's music could not teach him so much. Rather it acted as a starting-point for his own inspirations. I suspect Bach saw the unused possibilities in Corelli's themes, and felt he could have done more with them. At any rate his sole direct known link with Corelli is the theme from the second movement of the Fourth Sonata in Corelli's Opera 3, which Bach used for his early fugue in B minor, a work prior to the Weimar period.

At Cöthen, his next post, the violin took a paramount place. From these years between 1717 to 1723 date nearly all the chamber or orchestral compositions by Bach which we love best.

Speaking as a violinist, the Six Sonatas (Suites) for Violin Solo seem to me the most wonderful. How came he to imagine that

grandeur and beauty never heard before? Beauty perhaps never really heard then, save in Bach's imagination, yet I find it hard to believe those works had no basis then in real violin playing. It is certain from old Biber's Sonatas that within the limits imposed by the technical methods of the day, a very high degree of execution had been attained. Moreover, it was actually easier to play chords and double stopping at that time (and therefore easier to play Bach's Sonatas) than it is now, owing to changes in the violin fittings and bow. With a lower, flatter bridge and an out-curved bow—where the tension of the hair could be altered by the pressure of the player's thumb—all sorts of things were natural to Bach that to-day can only be snatched from impossibility by such marvellous and masterful players as Szigeti or Lionel Tertis. It may be that the beauty and purity of violin tone have suffered under modern adjustments (as antiquarians say), though the one performance I heard of a Bach Sonata on a fiddle with eighteenth century fittings left me doubtful. But that the old bow gave a great crispness in staccato effects and very rapid detached notes, together with clearness in the phrasing and sweetness in tone, I feel convinced. So we can imagine Bach with his short-necked violin, very firm in his stopping and incisive in his bowing, but very conservative about shifting, because with his chin on the right side of the tail piece (and there is strong presumptive evidence that both he and Handel held it thus) any incautious leap of the left hand might land the violin over his left shoulder.

It was not for bravura violinists, however, that about the year 1720 Bach wrote these Three Sonatas and Three Partitas for Violin alone. They had their origin in his intense concentration upon the essentials of music. Forkel, Bach's first biographer, has a passage to which too little attention has been paid. He says, 'in order to realise the care and skill Bach expended on his melody and harmony, and how he put the very best of his genius into his work, I need only instance his efforts to construct a composition incapable of being harmonised with another melodic part. In his day it was regarded as imperative to perfect the harmonic structure of part-writing. Consequently the composer was careful to complete his chords and leave no door open for another part. So far the rule had been followed more or less closely in music for two, three and four parts, and Bach observed it in such cases. But he applied it also to compositions consisting of a single part, and to a deliberate experiment in this form we owe the six Violin and the six Violoncello Solo Suites, which have no accompaniment and do not require one. So remarkable is Bach's skill that the solo instrument actually produces all the notes required for

complete harmony, rendering a second part unnecessary and even impossible.'

This would seem to dispose of the recent theory that everything—even to playing chords upside down—must be sacrificed to the contrapuntal flow. Forkel's words are true in all but one particular. It *was* possible to add parts, as Bach proved by his own arrangements. Of the three Sonatas (on the model of a *Sonata de Chiesa*) the Fugue from the G minor Sonata was transcribed by him in D minor for Organ, and the Fugue in its original key was transcribed for Lute. The whole of the A minor Sonata was transferred to the Clavier in D minor (and my humble feeling is that I like it better there than on the violin because it has more breathing space); while the Adagio from the C major Violin Sonata was taken over into G for the Clavier and considerably changed its effect in the process. Of the three Suites, or Partitas, Bach left the B minor and D minor (with its crowning glory of the Chaconne) untouched, but the third, in E major, he transcribed for an instrument which was almost certainly the lute. As clavier music all the sparkle would be gone, but Bach put the work an octave lower in the original key, while the last bars of the Prelude with their downward twist, instead of the triumphant upward rush of the violin, would be pusillanimous unless conditioned by the compass of the lute. He also adapted the Prelude as the orchestral Sinfonia for his Church Cantata No. 29, 'Wir danken dir, Gott,' and used it again in the incomplete Cantata, 'Herr Gott Beherrscher.'

But Bach never wrote an *accompaniment* to any of these violin originals. He expressly described them as '*senza Cembalo*' or '*senza Basse*'. Would that later men observed the injunction!! Mendelssohn and Schumann, warm with enthusiasm, weak in musical piety, both supplied accompaniments. To investigate their versions of the Chaconne is to feel one has suddenly discovered some unknown pages of the piano part of Mendelssohn's D minor Trio or some pages from Schumann's D minor Sonata for Piano and Violin. They are absurdly like their authors. Mendelssohn, the tactful man of the world, managed to be least of a failure; Schumann, more guileless, showed all his faults, especially that of doubling the violin and piano in unison.

The best men could not keep their hands off the Chaconne. Brahms arranged it for piano, left hand: Busoni expanded it for piano into what a little girl called 'an enormous maximum.'

As to the lesser folk, I find that by their agency Bach's Violin solos

have arrived at such unlikely incarnations as music for Harp, for Flute and Piano, or for American organ.

Of the Three Sonatas and Three Partitas in their original form, how can words give any idea of the profound intellect and emotions at work in them, of the grandeur, gaiety and sweetness of the music, and the immense range of technique. Corelli's sonatas are child's play beside them. Yet when new, Corelli's works were deemed next to unplayable, and a noble patron who wished to hear them was compelled to get four singers to execute them. (Imagine such a thing happening to-day!)

I have called the Chaconne, which stands as last movement to the D minor Partita, the crowning glory of Bach's violin music. In this magnificent set of Variations he sweeps forward as if on an Archangel's wings. Sometimes I wonder if he owed that supreme experience to an idea started in him by the earthly Arcangelo—Corelli, who in his set of D minor 'Folia' Variations for Violin, in the famous Opera Quinta, achieved something which might well have set Bach thinking how he himself would develop such a scheme. I do not contend that the Chaconne is the material descendant of Corelli's 'Folia,' but I do ask readers quite seriously to look first at Corelli's 'Folia,' then at Bach's Passacaglia in D minor for Clavier (Bach-Gessellschaft, Vol. 42) and finally at his Chaconne for Violin alone and then to consider if they do, or do not, feel the line of spiritual relationship.

Bach's works for Clavier and Violin consist of the six exquisite and well-known Sonatas; a charming Suite in A major, little known; a very long, learned Fuga for Violin and Continuo, apparently in G minor but really in the Dorian Mode transposed; a Sonata in G minor, which some people accept as authentic and others do not, though the authority of C. P. E. Bach seems good enough; a Sonata in E minor for Violin Solo with Continuo; and Four Inventions for Violin and Clavier. There is also a Sonata in C minor for Violin with figured Bass, authorship unknown, but which Ferdinand David ascribed to J. S. Bach on the nature of the contents. In the majority of works the Clavier and Violin were on equal terms, linked together as Violin and Cembalo, above the Fundamento. There was also a custom of employing an instrument of the Violoncello sort to play with the bass part. Bach regarded it here as optional; he described his Six Sonatas as 'for Cembalo certato e Violino, col Basso per Viola da Gamba accompagnato se piace.'

These six Sonatas, like the six solo works, are so beautiful that one despairs of doing them justice. The pathetic and pensive Sonata in B minor, with its expressive double stopping for the violin in thirds

and sixths; the glowing A major, which somehow gets tied up in my thoughts with the nineteenth Psalm; the golden E major, which might well be a tone poem of the new Jerusalem of Revelation; the C minor with its lovely Siciliano that seems like a prevision of the great violin obbligato in the St. Matthew Passion Music; the darkly mysterious, tragic F minor; and the joyous G major that gave Bach so much trouble before he got it right. What an example those last two give of Bach's ceaseless self-criticism. In his earliest versions of the F minor Sonata, the cembalo part in the Adagio had consisted entirely of short semiquaver figures against throbbing chords on the violin. Bach felt this was too dry and pedantic. He transformed all the semiquaver groups into melismatic or wave-like groups of demi-semiquavers, marvellously tender and poetic. In the last Sonata, the G major, his arrangements and rearrangements were so comprehensive that he almost recast the work before he satisfied himself that there was no monotony in the movements.

For the A major Suite Bach appears to have had in view a happy, brilliant piece for the violin. He employs rapid repetitions of one note across two strings with much skill—a favourite device of his, to judge from the Chaconne and the E major Partita. Being in a genial mood, he even touched in a bit of tone-painting for the A major Suite, giving the violin rising arpeggios like trumpet flourishes, answered by the cembalo with notes like drum-taps in the movement called 'Entrée.'

Unlike Handel, Bach's Chamber Trios for three instruments are few. The Sonata in C major, for two violins and clavier, is a solid work, splendid to play, and seems simply to shout 'Bach.' But the Sonata in F major for the same combination of instruments is probably not by him. Rust, of the Bachgesellschaft, could find no trace of him in it!

Six short Trios for Violin, Viola and Bass consist of two movements each, several of these being borrowed from Bach's own '48' or his six great Organ Sonatas.

A fascinating instance of Bach's fineness of ear occurs in his Trio for Flute, Violin and figured Bass. The work is in G major, and the original violin part bears the inscription 'Violino discórdato.' Accord



followed by a phrase from the first movement written out in A major instead of G. This seems to have worried Rust, who

got the idea that Bach had some intention of bringing the violin into connection with the flute, but could not quite work it out. I advance my view diffidently, but it seems to me that Bach by his scordatura (altered tuning) secured the free tone and sweetness of open strings throughout the violin for his tonic and dominant notes, since though the violin ostensibly played in A, it really sounded at the pitch of G in the two upper strings. Thus it approximated more nearly to flute tone than would be the case in an ordinary way.

A later work, the Sonata for Violin, Flute and Clavier in C minor, in the *Musikalisches Opfer*, has exquisite unity of feeling between the instruments, achieved without any such ostensible devices. Bach attains his result here by choice of material, figuration, and weaving of the parts—the music of a man who has seen all and known all.

It is hardly possible to pass to the Concertos for Violin without pausing for a moment on the Brandenburg Concertos. Think of the Brandenburg No. 1 where Bach adds a violino piccolo—higher pitched and sharper toned—to give an edge to the orchestral strings that will make them balance his bright mass of horns, oboes and bassoons. Recall the rich solo violin part in Concerto No. 2, and the very apotheosis of superb string writing in No. 3. Or consider the elaborate Violino principale in No. 4, which pushes up to the sixth position on the violin, and has a long cadenza that is a kind of counterpart to the Clavier cadenza in Concerto No. 5. What a gorgeous concerto to play No. 5 is, where the Violino principale has the parole, the first word in every movement! And then suddenly for No. 6 there are no violins, only dark-pansy coloured violas and lower strings. The Triple Concerto in A minor, for Flute, Violin, Clavier and Strings, is not in the same street as these Brandenburgs.

Bach has left us some wonderful concertos for solo violin—or violins. They would have been more but for the carelessness of some forgotten fiddler in losing the parts, or their desuetude and disappearance on account of differences in performing pitch between Cöthen and Leipzig. In the original, Bach's Clavier Concertos in D minor, D major, F minor, G major and G minor were for Violin; so also with the C minor Concertos for two Claviers, one is a transcription of the famous Double Concerto in D minor for two Violins, and the other is an arrangement of a lost Concerto for two Violins. But only two solo Violin Concertos (or three counting the fourth Brandenburg) and the Double Concerto, remain to us as Bach left them. These are the A minor and E major, which in their clavier incarnations appear in G minor and D major—a change dictated by the tone difference in pitch between the 'Cammerton' of the

orchestra and the higher 'Chorton' to which the Harpsichord was tuned—Bach thus avoiding the labour of transposing and recopying all his band parts. So far as I know this difference of key holds good of all the concerto transferences from Violin to Clavier with one notable exception—the D minor Solo Concerto, which was in the same key for both versions. Why? There must have been an explanation, though I hesitate to offer one. And if somebody suggests the work may have originally been in C minor for Violin, a very short study of the score explodes that theory, for the simple reason that several of the passages could only have been played on the violin in D minor. Indeed, the fiddle characteristics are so clearly marked that the reconstitution of the concerto for violin, carried out by Robert Reitz and published by Breitkopf and Härtel in 1917, was a real success. It is one of Bach's noblest works and holds a wealth of meaning: he used the first and second movements for his later Church Cantata, 'Wir müssen durch viel Trübsal in das Reich Gottes eingehen.' The F minor clavier concerto, restored to the violin and to G minor in the arrangement made by J. Bernard Jackson, is not so definitely violin music. It is published by the Oxford University Press.

Like the D minor solo concerto, those in A minor, E major, and the Double Concerto, follow the three movement Italian model and are scored with accompaniment for string orchestra and continuo. In the quick movements the solo violin is often immersed in the tutti and, on emerging, plays much the same material as that enjoyed by the ripieno parts, but in the slow movements the violin pours out its heart in marvellously expressive free melody above a moving orchestral accompaniment that is almost an ostinato. Music divinely beautiful, but searching out the very soul of the player in a kind of Judgment Day where nothing can be hid—not the least fault, subterfuge or meanness.

On paper these concertos do not look difficult, but to play they are very hard, because the fundamental texture (unlike that of Handel which consists principally of common chords and dominant sevenths) is with Bach thickly inwoven with chords of the diminished seventh. On keyboard instruments one is as easy as the other, but on string instruments the diminished sevenths, with their resulting intervals of diminished fifths, augmented fourths, augmented seconds, are the very dickens to play perfectly in tune. I have hardly ever heard a performance of the A minor concerto that was irreproachable in the matter of intonation.

To conquer such difficulties brings only the reward of a good conscience. But sometimes Bach aimed at brilliance with deliberate

intention. I am inclined to class the Sinfonie Satz in D major (from an unknown Church Cantata) as the most virtuoso-like thing he ever wrote for violin with orchestra. At one point he edges the violinist's hand up into the seventh position so skilfully that the player gets there and back without any risk of dropping his fiddle—and achieves a high A which Bach touched only once again for violin, at the most ecstatic moment of the obbligato in the 'Laudamus Te' of his B minor Mass.

I began this article by saying we must go through the eighteenth century style to find Bach and Handel. I end it by saying that, having found them, we must return to their style, for we shall never hear their work in its full beauty until performers give to it the right eighteenth century conditions. Few players, it is true, can produce harpsichords, low-bridged fiddles or out-curve bows. But everyone can, if they will, learn the rules and practice of eighteenth century interpretation and remember that ornaments in music are really intended to adorn it. No one of good taste, then or now, could enjoy the profusion of 'graces' added by silly players—but in the hands of fine artists they impart great elegance.

How many violinists realise that Handel, after the habit of his time, left his 'graces' to be added at the discretion of the artist—while Bach, like Beethoven after him, wrote out his ornaments in the texture of his movements. It is unthinkable that anyone could befrill his solo sonatas.

And how many people realise that even a long-held note—such as that for violin at the beginning of Bach's B minor Sonata for Violin and Clavier—is a 'grace,' and should be played as a singer would sustain it.

Again, how many players know that the dot was a 'grace,' and that a dotted note was usually taken as slightly longer and a short note following a dot as slightly shorter than written. If they did learn this, we should not hear so much music as of machines, or conversely, rabbits lopping forward! A dot was usually associated with beauty. Perhaps the supreme example occurs in Handel's setting of 'How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace' in the *Messiah*. He made many versions of this movement before he satisfied himself, and in every one the Siciliano rhythm, with the dotted note, persisted, as it must, for 'beautiful.'

Lastly, the ornaments give the pace for the movement. They are the touchstone of tempo, and unless they are right, the rest will be wrong. Beauty, after all, is not an idle rainbow.

MARION M. SCOTT.

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To conquer such difficulties brings only the reward of a good conscience. But sometimes Bach aimed at brilliance with deliberate

intention. I am inclined to class the Sinfonie Satz in D major (from an unknown Church Cantata) as the most virtuoso-like thing he ever wrote for violin with orchestra. At one point he edges the violinist's hand up into the seventh position so skilfully that the player gets there and back without any risk of dropping his fiddle—and achieves a high A which Bach touched only once again for violin, at the most ecstatic moment of the obbligato in the 'Laudamus Te' of his B minor Mass.

I began this article by saying we must go through the eighteenth century style to find Bach and Handel. I end it by saying that, having found them, we must return to their style, for we shall never hear their work in its full beauty until performers give to it the right eighteenth century conditions. Few players, it is true, can produce harpsichords, low-bridged fiddles or out-curve bows. But everyone can, if they will, learn the rules and practice of eighteenth century interpretation and remember that ornaments in music are really intended to adorn it. No one of good taste, then or now, could enjoy the profusion of 'graces' added by silly players—but in the hands of fine artists they impart great elegance.

How many violinists realise that Handel, after the habit of his time, left his 'graces' to be added at the discretion of the artist—while Bach, like Beethoven after him, wrote out his ornaments in the texture of his movements. It is unthinkable that anyone could befrill his solo sonatas.

And how many people realise that even a long-held note—such as that for violin at the beginning of Bach's B minor Sonata for Violin and Clavier—is a 'grace,' and should be played as a singer would sustain it.

Again, how many players know that the dot was a 'grace,' and that a dotted note was usually taken as slightly longer and a short note following a dot as slightly shorter than written. If they did learn this, we should not hear so much music as of machines, or conversely, rabbits lopping forward! A dot was usually associated with beauty. Perhaps the supreme example occurs in Handel's setting of 'How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace' in the *Messiah*. He made many versions of this movement before he satisfied himself, and in every one the Siciliano rhythm, with the dotted note, persisted, as it must, for 'beautiful.'

Lastly, the ornaments give the pace for the movement. They are the touchstone of tempo, and unless they are right, the rest will be wrong. Beauty, after all, is not an idle rainbow.

MARION M. SCOTT.

HANDEL'S SONGS AND SINGERS

WITH his songs Handel captured the heart of the world and retains his hold upon it still. Lovers of Handel, then, may be annoyed, but must not be surprised, if their friends are fond of asking questions about them such as these—‘ How many songs did Handel write? ’ ‘ What do you mean when you say that he understood the voice, or that his songs are vocal? ’ ‘ Is it really true that we cannot hear them sung as they were sung in Handel’s time? ’ My design in this article is mainly, but not entirely, to find answers to these questions. We will get rid of the first at once. With the exception of a handful of isolated songs and 240 in the Italian cantatas (Vols. 30-33 of the German Handel Society’s Edition), they are all to be found in the operas, oratorios, odes, anthems and other works, amounting by a rough calculation to 1,600 or thereabouts, so that 1,800 or 1,900 may be taken as a fairly safe estimate of the total. To it ought to be added an uncountable mass of recitative of both kinds and also the duets, of which there are 50 at least in the oratorios, etc., probably over 100 in the operas and 22 in the Italian duets (Vol. 32 of G.H.S.E.). I am unable to say how many of these songs and duets are in the *da capo* form—probably five-sixths. Handel rarely departed from it till he came to the oratorio—in which he broke from it more and more.

From Italian opera of the eighteenth century the public expected, as soon as the curtain rose at the conclusion of the overture, to hear a long succession of *da capo* arias with their attendant recitatives, a couple of duets and an occasional orchestral interlude. It was, in fact, a veritable orgy of song, or rather a kind of glorified singing-competition, in the course of which each of the principal singers illustrated the whole art of singing, as it was understood and practised at that time. This is the kind of opera which for about twenty years Handel strove with all his might to make the London public like. Opposition and faction, often of the meanest kind, and at last indifference brought it to an end and Handel himself, for the second time, to bankruptcy and a bad breakdown in health. He had already begun to try oratorio as a change, with enough success to make him resolve now to resort to it for good. The plan of it was the same as that of opera, but with this momentous difference, the introduction of a chorus. Otherwise the oratorios are really operas in disguise, so

that the songs in them, when removed from their dramatic surroundings, can only be imperfectly understood.

To return to the operas, they had no chance of success in London unless the finest singers in the world were brought there to sing them. Handel scoured Italy to find them, made up his mind whom he wanted, and by the promise of inordinate fees persuaded these to come. He was in one sense a unique impresario. Whereas to-day distinguished singers come to England to be heard in *rôles* in which they have already established their reputations, Handel's came to sing his own operas, operas which, when he engaged them, were not even written. That did not disturb him in the least. Give him three or four weeks and a new opera would be ready. When we think of the singers, we do wrong if we focus our minds on the displays of virtuosity, which formed a part, but by no means the greater part, of what they had to do. By the laws or traditions of Italian opera each of them was provided with five songs in different styles, so as to exhibit their powers not only in agility, but in *sostenuto*, in *cantabile*, in slow measures and in rapid measures, such as suited varied emotions. love baffled, love triumphant, envy, hatred, despair, resignation and so on. If Senesino could rouse an audience to frenzy by his shakes, his ornaments, and his divisions, he could move it to tears by the beauty of his *sostenuto* and his powers of expression. Recitatives were attached to almost all the songs, and one of these in each part was expected to be of the kind called by us 'accompanied,' but for which the Italian term *stromentato* is more explicit. This same Senesino was famous as having in recitative no equal in Europe. There is ample testimony that Handel's singers were not mere virtuosi, but fully competent musicians as well. The most wonderful members of Handel's casts were undoubtedly the *castrati*, artificial male sopranos and altos. They deserve to be named once more for the enormous influence they have had upon the art of singing. The elders among them in Handel's time were Bernacchi, 'the King of singers,' and Senesino of almost equal fame. Caffarelli and Farinelli were about twenty years their juniors and were the most famous of all Porpora's pupils. Caffarelli is chiefly known now as the victim (according to our modern ideas) of a famous sheet of exercises at which Porpora kept him for five (or seven) years. What we would really like to know is what Porpora taught him beside the famous sheet. He dismissed him with the words, 'Go my son. I have no more to teach you. You are the greatest singer in Europe.' Porpora the composer of operas was quite as well known as Porpora the teacher of singing. We may be sure he saw to it that his pupils

left him not only perfect singers but competent musicians. Burney said of Caffarelli that ' his voice and his talents were of the very first class.' He excelled in slow and pathetic airs as well as in the bravura style. He sang in Serse in 1738; if he took the title *rôle*, he was the first singer of 'Ombra mai fu' (worse known as Handel's Largo). Farinelli's present fame rests on his success in a competition between himself and a German trumpeter. Porpora composed for the occasion a song for voice and trumpet. The voice won on all counts but chiefly for a sustained note which it held both louder and longer than the trumpet, and also enriched with a wonderful crescendo and dimuendo, a point to which I will return.

Carestini, another of the great ones, had a singularly beautiful soprano, which fell to contralto or counter tenor, 'the deepest and fullest ever heard.' Handel chose him in preference to the more famous Caffarelli. It is the irony of fate that he is remembered now for having enraged Handel by refusing to sing 'Verdi prati' and being called 'you tog' for his presumption. The list may end with Nicolini, who had the voice of a nightingale, and Valentini, 'less powerful but more chaste in his singing' than Nicolini.

It is distressing to think of the chief male parts in opera being sung by these artificial sopranos and altos. We could not tolerate them now, but who of us would not give much to have heard them and the art which they brought to a perfection without parallel?

Of normal singers who visited London were two great basses, Boschi, who in Naples had sung the part of Polifemus in the original Italian cantata *Polifeme e Galatea*, and sang it also in *Acis and Galatea* in London. He had a phenomenal compass; it is surmised that Handel wrote for him the mighty cantata *Dell' Africane Selve*, in one passage of which the voice starts on A above the stave and lands in two or three bars on C \sharp below it, a perilous descent of more than two octaves and a half! The other was Montagnana, of whom it is enough to say that *Nasce al bosco* (*Ezio*) and *Sorge infesta* (*Orlando*) were composed for him. There was a fine tenor, Borosino, who distinguished himself in *Rodelinda* and *Giulio Cesare*. Among Handel's foreign sopranos the most important in the early London days were 'old Durastante,' as Handel called her (she was ten years younger than himself). She sang for him for four years, but was gradually eclipsed by two marvellous sopranos, Cuzzoni and Faustina Bordoni (who married Hasse the composer). Their bitter rivalry, which once came to actual fisticuffs on the stage, to the delight of the sporting members among the audience, has made capital copy for all Handel's biographers; Strada del Pò was 'a coarse singer with a fine voice,' Handel so

described her at first, but he came to admire her more and more. She sang in many operas, also in the first performance of *Athaliah* (at Oxford) and in *Alexander's Feast*; it is clear from the parts, in which she sang, that she had a good shake and brilliant execution. Avoglio, who took the soprano solos in the *Messiah* at its first performance in Dublin, 'pleased extraordinary,' as Handel wrote to Dr. Jennens. She did the same in London a little later in 'Let the bright Seraphim' (*Samson*), and presumably in the title rôle of *Semele*—all of which tells us a good deal about her. Francescina (a soubriquet really, because she was French) must have had the same kind of voice, and probably greater dramatic powers, having sung in several of Handel's operas, before he entrusted her with the exacting parts of Nicotris in *Belshazzar* and Iole in *Hercules*. Anastasia Robinson during the first twelve years of Handel's life in London sang in most of his operas. She had a fine extensive voice but uncertain intonation. She was privately married to the Earl of Peterborough, two years before she retired from the stage at the early age of twenty six. The name of Arne figures prominently in connection with Handelian singers. His sister Susanna, who as Mrs. Cibber became famous both as a tragedian and singer, took part as a young girl in the famous performance of *Acis and Galatea*, which Dr. Arne had no right to give; Handel wrote the alto parts in the *Messiah* and *Samson* expressly for her; though her voice was small, it was indescribably plaintive. Another singer, Cecilia Young (married to Dr. Arne in her twenty-sixth year) must have had the same kind of charm and brilliance in voice and style as Francescina and Avoglio. She sang in Dr. Arne's performance of *Acis*, later in *Alcina*, with a success which made Strada extremely jealous. Both took part in the first and triumphantly successful performance of *Alexander's Feast* (along with a new tenor, Mr. John Beard). I have devoted more space to her perhaps than she deserves, because of Dibdin's charming description, 'She was deliciously captivating. She knew nothing in singing or in nature but sweetness and simplicity. She sang exquisitely as a bird does, her notes conveyed involuntary pleasure and indefinable delight.' Could any young singer wish for more? Dr. Burney, too, praises her fine shake, and good natural voice, and adds that 'her style of singing was infinitely superior to that of any Englishwoman of her time.' A few words about John Beard, whom we meet first as a Chapel Royal chorister, taking part in the Gates' performance of *Esther* in 1732. When grown up he had a clear tenor voice, more powerful than sweet, and was a first-rate sight-reader and an excellent musician. The tenor parts in *Alexander's Feast*, *Israel in Egypt*, *Messiah*, *Samson*, *Judas*

Maceabaeus and Jephtha were composed for him. His style and power of expression must have been uncommon, for Horace Walpole and Handel himself have both said, probably of a particular occasion, that he had little or no voice. One more name—Gustavus Waltz, Handel's cook, and afterwards a singer with a deep bass voice. He sang in Deborah, also in Israel in Egypt with Reinhold in 'The Lord is a man of war.' He is better known through Handel's remark about Gluck that 'he knows no more of *contrapunta* than my cook Waltz.'

What do we mean when we say that Handel understood the voice or that his songs are pre-eminently vocal, or what is it that makes his songs as satisfying to the singer as to those that hear him? Mainly the fact that by instinct and long personal experience of the best singers of his time he was as much at home in composing for the voice as Spohr in composing for the violin or Chopin for the piano. It was well said that a singer always guided his pen. He understood the full resources of the voice and its limitations, which brings us to the blessed word, *tessitura*, i.e., texture or distribution of notes in vocal music.

A normal voice (natural production being assumed) has a compass of two octaves, to which training may add some extra notes in either direction. Its middle part may be represented by the five or six notes above or below its central note, and it is on these, which Sullivan called 'the bread and butter notes,' that the bulk of a vocal work, whether for soloist or for choir, should chiefly fall. *Tessitura* is good when this is the case, with occasional excursions above or below, bad when the excursions are too long, too strenuous or too frequent, for they tire and strain the voices of singers and, it may be added, the ears of listeners.

In the next place Handel's songs are vocal because there is never an interval or a phrase that is unreasonably awkward or difficult for a trained voice to sing with both pleasure and ease. Unreasonable intervals (which Handel avoided) are those which the mental ear cannot be expected to realise instantaneously or *feel* to be right. This little word in italics is really the deciding factor. What the singer feels is right for him is vocal. His inward instincts decide the matter. It is because Handel's songs, and Schubert's, appeal to these instincts in an irresistible way, that they stand out as the two pre-eminently vocal composers of all time. Porpora's do not, though he knew more about the voice than Handel, because they are dull and uninspiring, nor do Bach's, because he wrote for the voice as if it were a flute, an oboe or a violin.

Handel would probably have laughed at the idea that anyone should try to explain the principles on which he composed for the voice. He would probably have said it was just experience and common sense. 'Have not I known singers and voices, good, bad and indifferent, all my life? Do not I love singing too much ever to hurt their voices or expect them to do what is unreasonable or impossible? Do I not hear them, when I compose?' only his language would have been a good deal stronger. He wrote for soprano, alto, tenor and bass, with none of our subdivisions, though they must have existed in his time as in ours. But they were not so marked. We may think this is not true, if we pick out particular songs and say 'this is for mezzo, this for light soprano, that for dramatic soprano.' But Handel rarely wrote songs, which stand by themselves, they all belong to *rôles*, and it is only by studying the *rôles* that one learns what he expects of voices. The Messiah songs are rather different; I mean that there is no reason why every song should not have a different singer, but as it is the only oratorio that English readers can be depended upon to know, I will use the soprano part to explain what I mean.

If it is given to a light soprano, she may shine in her opening recitatives and 'Come unto me,' but, unless she is an unusual example of this type of voice, she will not rise to the exultant joy or the breadth of style necessary for 'Rejoice greatly,' or to the splendid moments of climax in 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' On the other hand, a capable dramatic soprano, if she is equal to the two last songs, will have no difficulty in the first group. Again, it is hardly conceivable, should such an improbable event take place in a choral society as a production of Theodora (Handel's favourite opera) or Susanna, that the title *rôle* should be given to a light soprano. In the former opera Theodora only once rises above G to touch A \flat , in the latter Susanna sings A \sharp three or four times but without having to dwell upon it; in both parts there is more than one song which to-day a mezzo or even a contralto would sing better than a soprano. Handel probably had in mind a particular soprano with a rich and expressive middle voice and a somewhat limited upper range.

As these two oratorios were written in successive years (1749 and 1748 respectively), it is likely that the same soprano took the title *rôle* in each. Both were dismal failures, but it would be unkind to surmise that this singer, whoever she was, may have been responsible; at any rate, Handel accounted for the failure of Theodora differently—'The Jews,' he said, 'will not come because it is a Christian story, the ladies because it is a virtuous one.'

From a general study of Handel's songs these facts become plain—

that his singers must be able to rely on a compass of two octaves of good quality and strength throughout (his basses are expected to sing from the low to the upper F, and an occasional G); secondly, that the qualities named were far more important than unusual compass. B \flat is the highest note for sopranos and occurs very seldom. Only thus could the same voice be able to sing in one work in many different styles.

To one accomplishment of the old singers I have already alluded in speaking of Farinelli and the trumpeter, viz., the power in sustaining notes of crescendo and dimuendo (usually called *messa di voce*). Long after Porpora's time it remained as the foundation and the final test of singing. It is hardly ever heard to-day. Sims Reeves told me that after his preliminary training he sang for a year or two in the provinces, then, being dissatisfied, 'he went to Italy and stayed there for three years till he could do whatever he liked with every note of his voice.' Not till the value of *messa di voce* is realised again shall we cease to groan over those dull, wooden, stagnant, and often wobbly notes, just waiting till the time comes to push on to the next, which are the curse of modern singing, the negation of phrasing and the death of rhythm.

And now the question of words. No great singer, past or present, has ever neglected them. The great declaimers have always been the great singers. There is no such thing in song as good declamation with bad singing. The maxim which used to govern singing was that words are placed upon the voice like 'jewels strung upon a golden thread.' To-day we are told 'Look after the word and the note will look after itself.' One has but to hear the singer, who has put his trust in this motto, ploughing his rough way through the Messiah or turning 'O ruddier than the cherry' into a patter song to realise what this principle comes to in practice. Santley, almost up to his eightieth year the embodiment of fine singing and dramatic declamation, wrote: 'It is never necessary for the sake of dramatic accent to sacrifice beauty of tone on a single note of a single syllable of the words.' He would have shaken Señor Casals by the hand for saying of his own instrument, that 'no phrase is a good phrase which contains any sound which is not a beautiful sound,' and added, 'in declamation as well as in melody.' Thank God, there are singers who believe this still, who put the music before the words, the composer before the poet, making the words in their subordinate place a joy to sing and a joy to hear, because music has taken them to her heart and made them share her beauty without parting with any of their own.

In conclusion. There is no lack of good and promising voices in

this country, while the percentage of singers who possess intelligence and musicianship is probably higher than it was fifty years ago, but in technique and efficiency the standard has perceptibly fallen, as perceptibly as it has risen in the case of instrumental performers. Yet the need for sound technique was never greater, not only on artistic grounds, but because the safety of the voice itself requires it, if it is to stand the strain of a professional career. The strain is greater to-day than in the past, because composers write for the voice without understanding it. In Handel's day all song was in the technical sense vocal, exhilarating, health-giving to sing! To-day most of it is the reverse. It is hard to understand why, under these conditions, singers persist in trying to do in three or four years what the experienced teachers of the past knew could not be done in less than five, six or seven. There are, of course, now and then people with phenomenal gifts and voices, nature's favourites, to whom no fixed regulations apply. But to-day it is clear that the shorter training is not a success. We may be in a hurry, acquiescing in the spirit of the age, but nature in physical as in other things, the voice included, is not. She takes her own time as she has always done. Can we wonder that many of the young and foolish fall out by the way, whereas the old singers kept their voices almost unimpaired till old age? We have yet to learn the lesson that it was the stern discipline in technique, begun early and continued through life, that made this possible.

Before another Handel memorial year comes, it will, I hope, be possible for no critic to add the words which I read the other day in praise of the soloists in the *Messiah*, 'in spite of Handel's stream of impossible difficulties.' They could not have been written in Victorian days of such a quartet of singers as Albani, Patey, Lloyd and Santley.

I will end on a happier note. Trying one day to find some singing on my wireless, I stopped suddenly at the sound of a voice at the opening bars of 'Sweet bird' from *L'Allegro*. This is not the type of song I expect to enjoy, but here was a voice and a young singer in perfect mutual understanding. A bird seemed to be carolling within her (as was once said of Cuzzoni, but not so politely). The difficulties of the song are many, but they seemed not to exist. It is enough to say that the voice held its own with the flutist, who played the obbligato, with perfect ease. In shakes, divisions, ornaments, *messa di voce*, indeed throughout the song, every note was clear, steady, unforced and beautiful. I thought of Cecilia Young and murmured, '*O si sic omnes!*'

THE RECITATIVES OF THE ST. MATTHEW PASSION

It may be convenient at the outset of this article to indicate the problems of these Recitatives: first of all the matter of Translation, secondly the question of Accompaniment, and lastly, once the two previous problems have been in some measure solved, the more difficult problem of Performance. If I may make at the start a general and comprehensive apology for the intrusion of my personal views and tastes, it will save repetition. I will also ask for an indemnity against wrath if I recount the stages by which I personally was led to the point of view which I now hold.

My first acquaintance with the *St. Matthew Passion* was in 1909, when, as an undergraduate at Cambridge, I sang in the chorus, when the narrator was Gervase Elwes and the words of Christ were sung by Francis Harford. I heard it again in 1911 at the Worcester Festival with Gervase Elwes and Campbell McInnes. I must confess that up to this time I was not an enthusiast about it. There had never seemed any dramatic continuity, the short outbursts of chorus were not enough to 'get your teeth into' (I compared them with the Mass in which I had also sung in Cambridge) and the arias, though beautiful to the ear, had never brought conviction to my mind. And, most important of all, I regarded the Narrator's Recitatives as a necessary evil which had to be got over in order that we might get to the choruses. In 1913 I got my first chance of singing those Recitatives myself in the chapel of Guy's Hospital, where the organist, that much-lamented genius, Denis Browne, had an excellent little choir. After the performance the chaplain said he had never heard anything sung or said so quickly in his life, and it reminded me then of Augustus Trollope's account of the Minor Canons of Winchester in the 1840's, one of whom boasted that 'he could give any man to Pontius Pilate in the Creed and beat him.' I was perhaps influenced by the amazing speed and articulation with which one of the Minor Canons of Worcester Cathedral—my home at that time—would career through the Prayer for Parliament.

After the war there was a performance at the Worcester Festival of 1920, when Gervase Elwes sang the Narrator, and as I was actually singing in that performance I could follow his way very closely and, indeed, discussed it with him. My impression is that he still

regarded it as not intrinsically interesting, either melodically or dramatically: the story had to be told as unobtrusively as possible in order that the comments on the story in the shape of aria and chorus might be made: but the emphasis was not on the story itself.

During the next few years I sang it occasionally, and it happened that in 1928 I had the opportunity of singing it several times, and I began to grow somewhat dissatisfied both with the manner in which the accompanying chords were arranged in any edition to which I had access, and also with the actual melodic outline of the notes as given in the various standard editions; and I discovered that the passages in which it was difficult to pitch the right interval were generally those from which the editors had removed one or more notes as written by Bach. But up to this time I had never taken what should have been the first step of all—I had never learnt it thoroughly in the original German. I took pains to do this, and during the autumn of 1928, when I was forced to spend three months in bed, I spent many hours of time in going over and over the German text and the various English versions, and at the same time I decided that I would go and study it from the beginning with Madame Wanda Landowska in her school outside Paris. I knew that her knowledge of such music was unrivalled and that she had many scores of times played the continuo for Willem Mengelberg's famous performances in Holland. To achieve what I wanted it was necessary also to study the accompaniments, and for that purpose Miss Jean Hamilton also came with me, and for some three weeks we worked with Mme. Landowska nearly every day, transcribing exactly her methods of accompaniment and learning from her the countless varieties of expression in the actual voice-part which had so long been unrevealed to me.

On returning to England, Miss Hamilton spent more time in making a version specially suitable to the piano rather than to the harpsichord, and I myself in rewriting entirely the recitative text to fit the Authorised Version words.

So much for the personal history with which I have felt it necessary to begin.

I. THE PROBLEM OF TRANSLATION

The syllabic method of setting the text which was traditional for recitative was seldom departed from by Bach except to illustrate with definite melismata such words as *gekreuziget*, *begraben*, *krähen*, and in the quite definite *arioso* passages at the words of the Institution of

the Eucharist. Thus it may be stated that the syllabic method was definitely in Bach's mind and his departure from it justified almost entirely by some pictorial idea.

The difficulty of translation as a general rule is to find suitable English words which will as a whole, and not syllable by syllable, articulate—*i.e.*, divide the words and have cæsura—in approximately the same manner as the German. For the *Passion* we have in existence an English version with which most listeners are familiar and which is an incomparable masterpiece of language. It is this text of the Authorised Version which alone rings true to our ears, and if we make up our minds to use it we must not hope to be able to use also in their entirety the notes that Bach wrote for the German version. It may seem superfluous to emphasise this, but I have often received letters from listeners who refer to one or other of the standard versions as 'the correct text,' and I have been reproved by a music critic for making 'departures from the text.' It cannot be made too clear that all existing English versions are a compromise between the musical text of Bach and the verbal text of the Authorised Version or other versions.

There are three possible methods:—

1. To take the musical text and to write to fit the musical phrase, a deliberate paraphrase of the A.V., or a new translation from the Greek, in the manner of Dr. Moffatt's translation of the New Testament in Modern English, or the Twentieth Century New Testament.

2. To take the A.V. text and to rewrite the music to fit it syllabically as Bach might have been expected to do had he known English as well as his native German.

3. To compromise between the two extremes, and to endeavour to secure a general conformity with Bach's syllabic treatment without any rigid adherence to that principle, while being still at liberty to rewrite boldly any musical passage that proves intractable.

There is one method which I myself cannot tolerate as a solution, that is to adopt the A.V. as a basis and to 'pad' it when extra syllables are required, or to use inversions when the accentuation is inconvenient. This seems to me to argue an insensitiveness to literary style which is more serious than any departure from the exact notes of recitative. For example, such inversions as 'He that his hand with me in the dish hath dippèd' and 'Thou shalt me thrice deny,' and such dangerous padding as 'Peter remembered *sore* the words of Jesus,' or 'The Son of Man is *about to go* as of him it hath been

written,' or such assonances as 'although all shall be offended,' or the failure to notice the characteristic usages of 'unto' and 'to,' all these to most ears detract more from the object of the narration, namely, to present a vivid story, than any departure from the exact notation.

Of the three former methods, the first so far as I know has never been seriously attempted, nor has the second, with sufficient boldness to distinguish it from the third method, of compromise.

The editors' prefaces present their dilemmas and their solutions very briefly, as will be seen by some extracts.

Novello, 1899.⁽¹⁾ 'The adaptation of the narrative of the Evangelist, a task rendered perhaps somewhat less difficult and hazardous by the aid of the Revised Version of the New Testament, has been carefully reconsidered and rearranged so as to preserve unaltered, *as far as may be*, the musical text of the original.' (Troutbeck.)

Stainer and Bell, 1910. 'The recitatives have been considerably revised in order to reproduce *as far as the English version will allow* the declamation of Bach.' (Stanford.)

Novello, 1911. 'Our aim has been to retain the words of the Authorised Version, and at the same time to reproduce Bach's declamation *as closely as the English words allow*.' A further note states it has been thought well in a few cases *to alter the sequence of the words* in order to preserve some characteristic point.' It is noted that in one recitative there has been '*a slight re-arrangement of the musical passage*.' (Elgar and Atkins.)

Breitkopf and Härtel, 1906. 'The chapters of St. Matthew are here reproduced without alteration.' (Claude Aveling.)

Boosey, 1877. 'The Biblical text has been faithfully followed—at the same time the accent and rhythm of Bach's melody has been so closely adapted that *no material change* has taken place—while in no instance has the harmony suffered misplacement.' (John Oxenford.)

Oxford Press, 1931. 'We have followed the simple but instructive rule, so to order the declamation that the composer, *were he to hear his work in English*, would be as little conscious as possible that it was being sung in a foreign tongue.' 'The assurance is hardly necessary that the task has been undertaken with the intention to

⁽¹⁾ Novello 1862 (Sterndale Bennett) makes no mention of any difficulty or compromise.

vary *as little as is necessary* a text hallowed by tradition and usage.' (C. Sanford Terry.)

The italicised words show the hesitations of the editors—' *as far as may be*,' or their re-assurance to themselves, ' *no material change*' '*as little as is necessary*'—but they none of them grasp firmly the real nettle, namely, that the rhythm of English is entirely different from the rhythm of German, and it will not suffice to keep the notes of Bach and lose the rhythm of English. Let us take two examples to show how this matter has been treated.

In No. 54 the German text is as follows :

ORIGINAL TEXT

Ex 1

Ex 1

Er hatte aber zu den delinquenten, einen sonderlich unruhenden Barabbas

This is bound to present a difficulty as the A.V., 'And they had then a notable prisoner called Barabbas,' has fifteen syllables compared with twenty-eight in German.

The solutions of the puzzle are as follows :

NOVELLO 1892

Ex 2

And at that time there was among the prisoners a notable one called Barabbas

This is a fairly free paraphrase, but notice the slowing up of pace on the 'notable one,' the two crotchets running are impossible in this style of Recitative.

STAINER-BELL 1910

Ex 3

And they had then... a prisoner and a notable one called Barabbas

We are nearing a solution as far as the first half of the sentence is concerned, but the rhythm limps badly in the second half.

NOVELLO 1911

Ex 4

And they had then a notable prisoner called Barabbas

The dotted crotchets give a bigger limp still.

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Ex 5 BRENTWOOD 1916

And they had there no notable prisoner a prisoner called Barabbas

Three crotchets running and the text altered despite the preface—see above.

Ex 6 BOOSEY 1977

And they had there notable prisoner call-ed Barabbas

Here the two minims top the lot for an impossible passage in recitative.

These are from the versions whose editors and translators claim that they have 'reproduced the declamation of Bach.' I consider that there is a considerable limitation to this claim, in that they have neglected the vital question of rhythm.

The following example is from the Oxford Press Edition :

Ex 7 OXFORD PRESS 1951

And they had there notable no - ta-ble pris-on-er who for insur-rection had been in prison Barabbas

This is the method of free paraphrase, and is a successful example of that method.

All these solvers are, however, 'tied by the leg' so long as they insist on keeping the exact number of bars of the original without regard to the rhythm of the contents. If there are only fifteen syllables to divide among the bars which have previously held twenty-eight, it is obvious that what must happen is a complete slowing up of the rhythm somewhere.

I have ventured in my own version to cut this knot by 'paraphrasing' Bach and collecting into one bar the melodic phrase that Bach spread over two and a half bars.

Ex 8 S.W.

And they had there notable pris-on-er Barabbas

The continuo also changes its position to back up, not the first change of the harmony from tonic to diminished seventh, but the most important moment in the phrase based on that harmony.

Another important aspect of English rhythm is its tendency in

sentences as well as in words to throw the accent back as far as possible : this is particularly noticeable when the sentence ends with a personal pronoun which it is not desired to emphasise. Such sentences as in No. 64 :

And after that they had mocked him
They took the robe off from him
And put his own raiment on him,

are all paroxytone or proparoxytone (*i.e.*, accent on the penultimate or antipenultimate), which correspond with a German text :

Und da sie ihn verspottet hätten
Zogen sie ihm den Mantel aus
Und zogen ihm seine Kleider an,

two of which are strongly oxytone (accent on the last syllable). The only way of securing an English equivalent which is truly English-rhythical instead of German-rhythical, is to treat it as follows :

GERMAN
Zogen sie ihm den Mantel aus
ENGLISH
They took the robe off from him

But no editor up to date has printed such a solution.

The question of ligatures *versus* syllabic style must not be shirked. But again it is a question of compromise and of personal taste. Sometimes the omission of one note in a melodic line, as for example the B in the last example does not seem to hamper the line of the phrase, whereas to remove the last A seems quite out of the question. The importance of preserving the natural English proparoxytone sentence-rhythm seems to me to be as essential as preserving the verbal accent correctly, and when Professor Terry states that his object is to make a version which would sound like German, he is forgetting that it cannot then sound like English.

From all this my deductions are that one cannot too boldly grasp the nettle of rewriting Bach in order to preserve the language and rhythms of the noblest prose in the English language. It may be unlike Bach to use ligatures freely, but we are not writing German recitative, we are attempting to write English recitative.

One more small point before the problem of translation is left. It has been considered a reverent and traditional manner of speech in church to sound wherever possible the final -ed of the past tenses of

verbs. An analysis of Elizabethan and Jacobean music, and of contemporary poetry, shows that both usages were concurrent (the spelling being sometimes altered, as ' vexed ' or ' vext ') as in the similar cases of words ending in -tion, which were apparently pronounced ' tempta-ti-on ' or ' tempta-tion ' according to circumstance. Throughout my own version I have left the final -ed mute in every case, as the old-fashioned ecclesiastical pronunciation now sounds somewhat affected to most ears and detracts from the straightforward dramatic value of telling the story in simple language.

II. THE PROBLEM OF ACCOMPANIMENT

The bass of Bach's recitative was played by a stringed instrument, and filled in with harmonies by a keyed instrument: this was the universal practice, except in England during the period 1800-1850, when Lindley the 'cellist and Dragonetti the bass-player—sitting at the same desk in the opera for fifty-two years—evolved a system of the double-bass sustaining the continuo, while the 'cello played arpeggios to support the voice. Rockstro agreed that this custom was confined to England, and Sir George Smart recorded that the only musical quarrel he ever had arose out of his forbidding Lindley to play thus in a Handel oratorio. An example is given in *Grove*, third edition, 1928, vol. iv, p. 337, s.v. Recitative. The writer of this article condemns the practice—which he never could have heard—as being 'entirely at variance with the effect intended by the composer.' The writer in the first, 1880, edition—who might well have heard it himself—says that 'Lindley's accompaniment of recitative was perfection.' Let us incline our hearts to remember that Taste and not Rule governs Performance.

In operas: *recitativo secco*, as opposed to *recitativo stromentato*, the *basso continuo*⁽²⁾ was written in long notes, semibreves and minims, and it is so written invariably in Handel oratorios, the church cantatas and the *St. John Passion*. But in the *St. Matthew Passion* the recitative bass is printed in the Bach-Gesellschaft in crotchets only,⁽³⁾ the notes of longer value being reserved for the string orchestra that accompanies the words of Christ. I do not think that the inference is that Bach intended here to depart, for the only time

(2) The term *continuo* or 'thorough-bass' properly implies a bass which is literally continuous, but the word is used with reasonable looseness to describe such a bass, figured or unfigured, as we are now discussing, which has rests and is not therefore continuous.

(3) I have unfortunately not been able to verify this fact from the actual MS.

in recorded music history, from keeping the bass virtually continuous in recitative. I will admit that a contrary opinion could, in theory, equally well be established, but I believe that in practice it is easier to listen to and easier to sing when the accompaniment is in sustained minims and not in detached crotchets. In support of this, Dr. J. E. Borland kindly allows me to tell this story, which he once told me. Dr. Borland as a young man played the piano for Otto Goldschmidt, the founder of the Bach Choir, and in playing recitative did not 'revive the bass.' Goldschmidt told him that his teacher Schneider had laid it down that Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach had said that the bass must always be 'revived' as long as the bass note continued to be the harmonic bass of the melody of the recitative. This Johann Gottlob Schneider was organist at Dresden and had the reputation of having the direct tradition of John Sebastian Bach himself. This living chain of evidence is worth more to me than many books of theory.

This is also the firm conviction of Madame Wanda Landowska, to whom, as I have already said, both my collaborator in this work, Miss Jean Hamilton, and I myself owe all our inspiration. We boldly tackled the first recitative in the *St. Matthew Passion*, which opens in Bach's own MS. with a single crotchet G on the first beat. N.B.—In all these examples Bach's bass, with any figuring of his, is given in brackets.



This treatment challenges many hitherto received methods of accompanying recitative: first, it lengthens and repeats the bass note; secondly, it does not wait for an indication of figuring to change to 6/4 7/5 as necessary; thirdly, it places the notes of the chord in a widely spread position, starting from the G below the bass clef, which a harpsichord could not play, and rising to the D in the treble clef above the limits usually assigned to accompanying chords, and finally resolves in the chord played by the orchestra.

The first point, to lengthen and repeat the bass note, must be stretched to include, where necessity of translation arises, putting the bass note at any beat in the bar where the words require it, not being

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necessarily the beat at which Bach placed it to suit his German text, as in Ex. E in Part III of this article. It must also cover the rare occasions when the exciting rhythm of the crowd, in No. 32, surging into the garden to arrest Jesus, seems to need a bass, and Bach has left the bar empty.



The second point, to change the figuring as needed, must follow as an obvious corollary once the first is conceded.

The third point is important and novel, for it implies that we are definitely writing for a modern piano where the sonority of the lowest octave is far greater than that of the harpsichord; where notes in such octaves must be widely spaced, whereas in the harpsichord they must be close, to be effective; and moreover we will boldly write an arpeggio over five octaves in order to emphasise 'then all the disciples *forsook him and fled*'.



One must not forget that the sustaining powers of the piano are so much greater than that of the harpsichord that it was all the more necessary in Bach's day to 'revive the bass,' with arpeggios, repeated notes, or contrapuntal devices, and in actual fact John Sebastian himself must have done far more 'filling-up' than a modern pianist would require (or dare) to do. The greater resonance of the piano also permits of another device, namely, to lift the damper of the string with the gentlest touch of the note and to allow the voice to cause that string to vibrate in sympathy. (See Ex. A in Part III below.) Again, the more continuous sounding power of the piano causes the silences in the rests to be not mere accidents but

definite planned functions in the whole scheme, as, for example, the sudden silence in No. 32 at the words, 'and kissed him.' (Ex. D in Part III below.)

The theory that the accompaniment should be kept low in position is no doubt based on C. P. E. Bach's 'Versuch,' but the qualities of a modern piano must be allowed for in modifying the strict rule for harpsichord playing. Lastly, it is the habit of Bach in the *St. Matthew Passion* to introduce the words of Jesus by a note on the bass before the upper strings play: it is to fill in this gap that the keyboard instrument is also useful. There is every reason to believe, both from general custom and from the fact of the bass being figured throughout while the strings are playing, and further from C. P. E. Bach's statement that 'no piece can be performed satisfactorily without a keyed instrument,' that the harpsichord would have played throughout in Bach's own performance.

The ordinary view held even to-day of the function of the continuo player in recitative is to set the key by a staccato chord at the beginning, to end with an 'Amen' cadence, and to interject by the way an occasional, unavoidable, and usually unrelated, chord. Our own view differs widely from this, as has already been shown, not only in its main principles described above, but in the following subsidiary characteristics. First, the maintenance in the right hand of a definite melodic line in conjunct movement; next, the importance of definite contrapuntal inner parts where they may be required, and last, attention to providing variety in the formal cadences according to their importance in the dramatic scheme.

First—a definite melodic line :

Ex II N° 33

Second—definite contrapuntal inner parts :

Third—cadences. Variety in these can be obtained in several ways:

- (a) Suspensions.
 - (b) Spacing of notes in the chords.
 - (c) Elaboration of parts either in continuation of the melody of the recitative or independently :

The musical score consists of five staves of music. The first three staves are grouped under measure 24, with lyrics "Heavy" and "are - - - - - afraid." The fourth staff is under measure 30, with lyrics "Jesus and John have". The fifth staff is under measure 32. The sixth staff is under measure 34, with lyrics "be - cause of him". The seventh staff is under measure 35, with lyrics "yet sounding none". Measure numbers 24, 30, 32, 34, and 35 are written above their respective groups of staves.

(a) Suspensions will be only used for the same reason as appoggiaturas (see below in Part III of this article) for increasing emotion. This example is from the end of the words 'and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.'

(b) The open fifths are the cadence which follows the words 'and when he had scourged Jesus he delivered him to be crucified.' The bare octave at the words 'Then came they and laid hands on Jesus and took him.'

(c) Pilate's wife 'suffered many things in a dream because of him.' In the second exquisitely simple cadence 'many false witnesses came, yet found they none.'

Another way in which variety can be obtained during the run of

the recitative—*i.e.*, neither by the introductory chord nor by the cadences—is by altering the position of the chord to suit the mood of the moment. In such a passage as the end of No. 15, ‘and they were exceeding sorrowful and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord is it I,’ the accompanying chords are kept low in the sombre key of B flat minor. In No. 59, when Pilate cheerfully disclaims responsibility, ‘I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it,’ the accompaniment sustains this atmosphere (see Ex. IV above), the rhythmical contrasting chords at ‘one upon the right hand, and another on the left,’ are placed in a high and low position respectively.

We do not wish to let the impression remain that it is only by a few dramatic or obvious touches that the perfect accompaniment will be achieved: it is rather by the persistent and scrupulous care with which each cadence is considered, each chord spaced in the most effective style, and the value of each touch adjusted to fit the surroundings. Finally, the pianist must enter into the spirit of the performance, as described in the next part of this article, no less than the singer. The quality of touch is supremely important as well as the actual notes sounded; the pianist must back up the urgent rhythms calling the chorus in, must slow down the long sorrowful cadences that mark each poignant moment in the story, responding to the elasticity of each living phrase so that the curved steel of the melody bends but never breaks, tempered to express every degree of imaginative utterance.

III. THE PROBLEM OF PERFORMANCE

The Narrator must consider himself as the story-teller-in-chief; although he does not himself utter the spoken words of the various characters, he prepares the stage for them and ‘calls them on’ in their various degrees of importance and in their separate character. The *mise-en-scène* of the drama is his care—and no man can neglect so important a feature. How is this care to be undertaken? Principally, I think, by attention to the broad principles of story-telling—variation in pitch of the voice, in pace of narration, in intensity of feeling. The pitch of the voice is already determined by the music—but the pace is left entirely to the discretion of the singer, who can vary it episode by episode and sentence by sentence, keeping in mind always the one object a story-teller has in view, to interest his listeners, now by one mood and now by another, never maintaining the same mood for too long. Musical rhythm must always be con-

sidered, and though it may be perfectly legitimate to sing one phrase twice as fast as another, yet in that one phrase a definite rhythm must exist. The characteristic English word cadence—proparoxytone as we have said already—must be preserved if possible with a dotted rhythm $\text{J} \cdot \text{J}$ to suit such words and phrases as 'Gethsémane,' 'Gólgota,' 'Fiéld of Blood,' 'múltitude,' 'óff from him,' and sometimes in a continuous rhythm, such as 'rólled a great stóne to the dóor of the sépulchre,' which constitutes a long 12/8 rhythm. There is also another most important factor, that of silence; the slight pause before the telling word, the time to be allowed for the dramatic moment to enter into the listener's mind, the silence that closes one episode and introduces another; all these are part of the framework of the larger rhythm that encloses the picture which has been painted by close attention to the smaller rhythms.

Bach himself has assisted the singer by writing certain passages in an obvious though not directly indicated arioso: the best known are the melismata on the words 'wept bitterly' in No. 46 after Peter's denial, and 'to crucify him' in No. 64. Less conspicuous are such passages as 'and poured it on his head as he sat at meat' in No. 6, or 'and began to be sorrowful and very heavy' in No. 24. But in fact there are many more, some of which gain their significance from the fact that the phrases before have been very freely uttered, and thus the strictly measured time has a certain gravity, as in No. 24, 'Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples,' which, if put under the microscope, yields the following qualities: The introductory words, 'Then cometh Jesus with them,' are one unit spoken in absolutely free speech-rhythm which defies exact musical notation; then the next unit, 'unto a place' slight pause 'called,' another comma, to introduce the solemn word 'Gethsemane' in the strict rhythm of $\text{J} \cdot \text{J}$, and in the same slow tempo the grave musical phrase that introduces the words of Jesus, 'sit ye here while I go yonder and pray,' a simple phrase concealing its beauty and dignity. Note the treble of the accompaniment touching gently the E flat to accentuate the pathos.

Ex A

Then cometh Je-sus with them un-to a place called Gethse-mane, and saith un-to the dis-ci-ples,

A great deal might be written on each recitative to attempt to explain by words what words can no more exactly convey than musical notation. Each word is a jewel that can be polished, each sentence has its rhythm, and each episode its peculiar dramatic value. The character of Judas, for example, gradually unfolds itself: first, the quickly muttered agreement that thirty pieces of silver was a fair price, through the sad avowal that this was the beginning of the treachery (in a characteristic 'sentimental' jump of the dominant seventh and with the melancholy of its cadence carried on by the continuo):

The parentheses (I have actually inserted the brackets) which follow the future mention of Judas' name, in No. 17 sharply anticipating the tragedy, in No. 49 poignantly recalling the misery of the treachery:

Ex C

M²¹⁷

Please answer Judas, (which did he say) and said

M²²⁹

Barn Judas (which had he played here)

all seem to make more heart-searching still the actual moment of betrayal.

' And forthwith he came to Jesus and said, Hail master; and kissed him.'

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The very fact that this dropping seventh is unique among the Passion cadences emphasises the icy chill of the traitor's salute, emphasised by the cessation of the accompaniment.

The Narrator must be alive to the steady growth of the emotion in the scenes of the Agony in the Garden (Nos. 24-31), beginning with Christ's request to his Disciples to watch with him, which leads to the exquisite lullaby for tenor, oboe and chorus; through Christ's increasing intensity of prayer that he might be spared the final humiliation, through the bass aria in G minor treading an infinitely solemn dance-measure (as so often in the Passions—*e.g.*, the Institution of the Eucharist in minuet-rhythm), again returning to the scene in the garden with growing passion as the Narrator's voice rises :



(N.B.—In the original German Bach permits himself the unique emphasis in these recitatives of a dotted crotchet on the D♯ for the first syllable of 'Betete und sprach' which gives some grounds for turning the phrase into a melisma.)

And finally the congregation, taking up the last words of Christ, 'Thy will be done,' joints itself into the drama and adds not a comment, but the individual identification each person present with the agony of mind described in those scenes.

No discussion of Performance can omit the vexed question of the appoggiatura. For a fuller dissertation on this the reader is referred to a Symposium in MUSIC AND LETTERS, vol. V, No. 2, April, 1924, in particular to Mr. Herman Klein's contribution. To summarise his argument here briefly : The appoggiatura is a note added in order to arrive more gracefully at the following note, whether rising or falling. These passing notes were never written into vocal parts as it was deemed a reflection upon the personal taste of the singer to indicate to him what was so obvious. In Italian music its omission is unthinkable. The only question for us to decide is how far Handel and Bach

expected to hear the Italian style used in their music. Of Handel it may be said at once that he could not have expected to hear any other style, and therefore to remove *all* appoggiaturas from the *Messiah* recitatives is an unscholarly, unimaginative, piece of pedantry. The question can never be solved in its entirety—what did the composers expect to hear? But when—as in the soprano-alto duet of the *Matthew Passion*, No. 33—the instruments have a written out appoggiatura and the voices singing an identical and sometimes simultaneous phrase have none, one must infer that the singers did not need reminding of this necessity. An instance which I believe has not been quoted in this argument before is that of the instrumental bass in the Chorai Symphony *versus* the vocal bass in two identical passages, where it was clearly necessary to insert for the instrument the appoggiatura which the singer would sing by instinct.



Herman Klein summarises Spitta's view, that the omission of the appoggiatura in church music was designed to give the recitatives a non-theatrical style, but that this omission is directly contrary to the contemporary tradition of Bach, where the universal rule was to treat church recitative in a melodious rather than a declamatory manner, whereas in opera the reverse was the case.

My own personal opinion leads me to use the appoggiatura mainly for emotional purposes, as a strong suspension. Where no emotion is needed it can be omitted. Thus, in two similar musical passages: the first is not emotional, but in the second every legitimate device to strengthen the pathos of the word 'forsaken' must be employed.



I have no hesitation in using appoggiaturas to avoid a repeated note in a cadence where the pace is quick and conversational, thus obeying the age-long convention of the operatic secco:



I must apologise for the intrusion of a personal opinion into the

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middle of learned opinions, justifying myself by an adaptation from H. W. Fowler's *Modern English Usage*: ' Some singers certainly need advice upon it and few have time for the inductive process required, in default of perfect musical instinct, to establish sound rules.'

Out of many more characterising touches that might be mentioned I will only give one. The very last recitative which the Narrator sings, ' So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch,' must be made to contain, in the voice, the qualities which it seems to me to contain in the music directly, and by implication in the narrative : the first is the half-mocking touch of the word ' sure,' the formality of the seals and the watch, so pompous, so useless, so like official man attempting to imprison the Spirit ; and the second is the feeling of suspense, as we know very well that the story is not ended, but indeed only begun.

Such is the nature, it seems to me, of the Recitatives in the Passion, and such are the qualities for performance which they demand, that it has been truly said of this music that it can only show ' how great and satisfying Bach is, and how little fit we are to be in his company.'

STUART WILSON.

HANDEL AND BACH

Extract from the speech of the German Ambassador on opening an exhibition of autographs at Oxford.

. . . WHAT a memorable coincidence it is, that the two great musicians, whom we honour to-day and whose works form the cornerstone of all later musical creations, were born in the same year and within less than eighty miles of one another! And yet their lives ran on very different lines.

Händel was born at Halle. After some time spent in the study of law and music at Hamburg, he went to Italy, where he achieved his first opera success. At twenty-five years of age he was appointed Kapellmeister to the Court at Hanover and then, at the invitation of influential patrons, he came to London, where he ultimately settled.

Here he composed his first work of importance, his opera *Rinaldo*, which he wrote in fourteen days. It was very successfully performed at the Haymarket Theatre. His publisher made £1,500 out of this opera, on hearing which Händel remarked to him : ' You shall compose the next opera and I will sell it ! '

For long years he continued to devote his chief activity to the theatre, displaying prodigious industry and an almost incredible productivity as composer of operas. In spite of great difficulties he managed, for many years, to keep the opera live. But, at length, his own undaunted efforts and the endeavour of his faithful friends proved to be in vain and, serious illness overtaking him, he left the theatre for good, at the age of fifty, and devoted himself to sacred compositions, which he said were ' best suited to a man descending in the vale of years.'

Henceforth his life's work was to be the composition of oratorios.

We are tempted to thank fate for denying him full success in opera, for this failure led him to that new field of activity, in which he achieved unprecedented fame and gave to the world his greatest works. Under Händel's hand the oratorio developed from a twin sister of the opera into a new form of art of its own and gave him the opportunity to display his true genius.

Händel has also rendered important service to instrumental music. As brilliant testimony of his inexhaustible inventive genius let me

name in that respect : the so-called ' Water Music ' for orchestra, written at the beginning of his sojourn in London for a Court water party on the Thames ; his sonatas for violin or flute with accompaniment ; his ' concerti grossi ' for string and wind instruments ; above all his organ concertos, of which he wrote no fewer than twenty-one.

But all these works are overshadowed by his most sublime work, the *Messiah*. No greater proof can we have of what the *Messiah* means to the English public, than the fact, that every performance of this imperishable creation fills the Albert Hall to capacity, even—as has been said—on a fine day.

In contrast to Händel's somewhat chequered career, Bach's life followed outwardly a very normal and quiet course. He belonged to a family which had produced so many musicians for several generations that the name of Bach was in his part of the world all but synonymous with musician. The town bands were mostly called Bach bands, there always being bearers of this name among them. Thus, Johann Sebastian was from the beginning destined to be a musician.

In his earlier years we find him acting as church organist or Kapellmeister or court musician at several small capitals, above all at Weimar and at Köthen, until, at the age of thirty-eight, he ultimately became a Cantor of the Thomas School and Church at Leipzig and thus established his position in life.

There he lived to the end of his days and wrote the bulk of his finest compositions : the St. John Passion, the St. Matthew Passion, the Mass in B minor and many of his maturest Cantatas.

He died at sixty-five years of age, having been twice married and given life to no less than twenty children, of whom, however, only ten outlived him. Four of his sons carried on the Bach tradition and gained importance as musicians.

It has been said that Bach is to German music as Hellas is to all subsequent history of art. In his work, on the one hand, the style of a preceding period, polyphony, reaches its highest perfection, whereas, on the other hand, he developed harmony in its clearest interpretation.

Bach's starting point was the art of organ music. His fantasias, fugues, toccatas, preludes reach the very zenith of all organ compositions. Bach also created works of imperishable fame for the harpsichord. He has left us numerous chamber-music compositions, orchestral suites and above all that great quantity of church music, which he had to write for the annual church festivals at Leipzig. To this circumstance we owe, not only the amazing treasury of his two

hundred church cantatas, but also the two incomparable Passions, the St. John and St. Matthew.

Händel travelled in the wide world, and became the greatest musician of his time, a giant in his own way, esteemed and honoured by his contemporaries. During his whole life he was occupied with the accomplishment of great tasks and he enormously influenced the development of music, especially the music of England. In spite of bankruptcy, incurred through his theatre partnership, he left at his death a considerable fortune and was honoured with burial in Westminster Abbey.

Bach developed his art in the tranquility of his narrow surroundings. From the very beginning he had found his course, and he pursued this course steadily and unwaveringly during his whole life. The world, in which he lived, realised but imperfectly his real value. He received little encouragement and less tangible reward. Thus he worked on, without craving worldly fame or advantage, but his mighty genius ever soaring higher and higher. More appreciated as a capable organist than as a composer, he died nine years before Händel, and a long time passed before a monument was erected to his memory.

While Händel's works were from the beginning fully appreciated and for many decades completely dominated the world of music, Bach's art was for long years almost forgotten. Nearly a century passed before his work came to light, but then it started, growing slowly but surely and constantly in appreciation, until at last it was considered worthy to rank with, if not to surpass, that of Händel.

Widely as these two men of genius differed in their outward lives and in their destiny, yet in the worth and grandeur of their art they were one. Bach was the embodiment of church and organ music, and Händel was in like measure the very incarnation of vocal and instrumental music. No age can show at the same point of time anything that could even remotely approach the oratorios of the latter and the fugues of the former. Bach's particular domain was the harmonious and lyric, Händel's the dramatic. Each is unique in the history of music. To each humanity owes an everlasting debt of gratitude. Both bear the crown of immortality.

In thinking of the high blessings, which generation after generation has derived from the works of the two great masters, let me pay homage in your name to their memory on this day of grateful recollection.

Händel and Bach, both German in origin and both thoroughly German in the conception of their art, but the former having passed the greater part of his life in England and having reached *here* the

summit of his artistic development, the latter owing to a large part to *this* country the final recognition of his greatness, are they not very convincing witnesses of the deep community of thought, feeling, and ideals, which has through centuries united our two nations? Links of that kind, that go down to the root of our human existence, are stronger and more enduring than political or economical frictions. To cherish them is for us a noble duty, even more urgent in time of trouble, than in time of tranquility, if we would preserve humanity from losing, through the daily discussion of divergencies and mutual difficulties, the true conception of our common ideals.

You, sir, and the distinguished organisers of this beautiful exhibition, have honoured yourselves and have honoured once more this ancient city of Oxford by raising our thoughts above dreary recriminations and regrettable misunderstandings to the height of everlasting common values. We Germans are grateful to you for having honoured in such an impressive way the memory of our two illustrious countrymen, and my Government has thought, that they could not testify their appreciation better than by complying with the request of the organisers, and entrusting several precious manuscripts to their care for public exhibition on this occasion.

BACH THROUGH THE AGES

To celebrate the two-hundred-and-fiftieth birthday of Johann Sebastian Bach very many essays are sure to appear. Their titles will probably be 'Bach and Ourselves' or 'Bach and the Present Age' or 'Bach and our own Times.' And it is really a subject worth thinking about, though its investigation can only be approached with a proviso—that of modesty. A similar case already presented itself in the year 1927, the centenary-year of Beethoven's death. We honoured Beethoven, we studied our relationship with him, we were proud of our possession, we flattered ourselves by thinking that we understood his greatness. And only a few suspected and voiced their suspicion that actually it was Beethoven who was sitting in judgment upon us; that nothing which we could say in his honour or in recognition of his merits, his greatness, his versatility and obscurity, was adequate.

To-day we celebrate Bach. In other words, we now sun ourselves in Bach's light. And yet Bach is still greater, more spacious, and more obscure than Beethoven; though we have to remember that Beethoven already stands on the hither side of the border-line which divides us from the older classics. We do not know the complete Bach. This even applies literally, for many of his works—a quarter of his church-cantatas and a great Passion—are irrevocably lost. But it applies still more in a figurative sense. Bach is so great that no generation can visualise more than one side of his being, leaving other aspects in deep shadow. No epoch has recognised him entirely, for none can appreciate him completely.

It will be unnecessary to say that his own era did not know him, though probably Bach himself did not carry through life the feeling of being 'misunderstood' or 'misjudged.' This is a romantic sentiment among artists which had not yet been expressed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He knew quite well who he was and that contented him. Of his personality we know little. He did not disclose himself in his letters as did Mozart or Schumann or even Wagner; indeed, we know only of one single intimate piece of confidential writing in his hand. We are further acquainted with a number of memorials addressed to those 'set in authority over him.' He appears before us as a man with an insatiable desire to learn, a passionate self-will, a stern and inflexible orthodoxy in matters con-

nected with his faith, a fixed routine in his daily life; a citizen, a craftsman, a goldsmith in sounds. Only these sounds betray what went on within himself. The times do not understand him; they admire in him not the creator but rather, in the first place, the virtuoso. J. A. Scheibe in his *Critische Musicus* calls him the 'Lohenstein of Music,' and compares him thereby with the most demodé representative of an excessively high-flown rococo poesy. A. Sorge in the dedication to his *Clavier-Uebung* of 1738 designates him merely as the 'prince of all clavier and organ players.' J. M. Gessner, rector of the St. Thomas School, in his edition of the *Institutiones* of Quintilian, draws a rhetorical comparison between him and Orpheus and Arion. When, in 1722, the St. Thomas cantor Kuhnau died, the senate of the illustrious city of Leipzig turned first to Telemann and Graupner; and only when Telemann declined the post and Graupner was refused permission to change by the Landgrave of Hesse, did they approach Bach; whereby one of the council, whose name deserves to be immortalised, made the observation: that if one could not obtain the best, one had to rest contented with the mediocre. The man of whom this was said had by then already written the Inventions and Symphonies, the first part of the Well-tempered Clavier, the Chromatic Fantasia, the Organ-book, and a few of the biggest Preludes and Fugues for the organ and the Brandenburg Concerti. Bach was compared by his contemporaries with all that was mediocre at the time—when he was in luck, with Telemann, Fasch, Stoelzel, or Graun. In his later years he no longer belonged to his own period. It should not be imagined that Frederic the Great, when he invited him to Potsdam in 1747, possessed a just standard for the valuation of Bach's true greatness. 'Old Bach' was in his eyes only a contrapuntal fossil, a freak surviving past ages. Perhaps because Bach himself, towards the end of his life, finding himself to be the antithesis of his own times, defiantly and intentionally accentuated it. He saw music, which had become 'learned,' striving towards new times, towards a new epoch; he saw the fundamental principles of his music—the polyphonic style which his own 'galantries' permeated and quickened in every fibre—turned into 'learning' and so petrified. He completed the second part of the Well-tempered Clavier, his last organ-fugues and choral-preludes, his 'Musical Offering,' and 'The Art of the Fugue.' He once more bridged the gulf to the sixteenth century, which had long ago been opened; he carried in himself the inheritance of six or seven generations of musicians; and he bequeathed it all to the centuries that were to come. No one knows any more about it. Only a few organists are conscious of it; as was old J. A. Reincken in Hamburg who, after, hearing some choral-

variations of Bach's, said to him : ' I thought this art had died out ; but I see that it still lives in you.' Bach stands lonely in his own times. He is no contemporary ; but he is a successor in a sense more comprehensive than that in which this word is generally employed.

The generation of the sons is always most ungrateful to that of the fathers. This fits in Bach's own case and that of his sons. I will not speak of Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, who stands so disconnected between epochs and who, as in the case of the organ concerti after Vivaldi, simply appropriates works of his father's ; I will not speak of Johann Christian Bach, the youngest and most genial son, who calls him shortly and pithily ' the old wig.' Even Philipp Emanuel, the most reverent, no longer understands him ; his edition of Johann Sebastian's Chorales proves it. When contemporaries wish to honour the bearer of the name of Bach, it is Philipp Emanuel, the ' Hamburg Bach,' or Johann Christian, the ' London Bach.' Hiller, one of Bach's successors as cantor of St. Thomas—who only understood art as being Italian art and thus to some extent understood the old classic Italian, namely Handel—places Johann Sebastian Bach as fifth on a list after Telemann, Staelzel, Fasch, and Pfieffer (*Wöchentliche Nachrichten*, III, 50). J. F. Reichardt, who for a time was Goethe's and Schiller's musical companion, says condescendingly that Bach was ' only more learned in art and more industrious than Handel.' Bach is no longer known. The only works by Bach published during his lifetime were his ' Clavier-Uebung,' the ' Musical Offering,' and Choral-preludes ; the posthumous ' Art of the Fugue ' proved to be what modern publishers would call a complete failure. The bulk of the sacred works lies buried. Only in Leipzig do the Passions and the Motets still enjoy a fitful life.

Mozart's is the only creative spirit which recognises his greatness. When he comes to Leipzig in 1789 he spreads the parts of the Motets before him on the floor and constructs for himself the mighty scores. He is, apart from Haydn, the only one who again throws a bridge over the gap between ' galant ' and ' learned.' In quite different manner, however, from Haydn who preserved the learned style in his symphony and in his quartet as ' object '—not as the object of ridicule, but of wit and humour—and in place of the learned manner he sets thematic work. Mozart also wrote a series of style-imitations—an unfinished suite, fugues for the pianoforte, a song-parody (' Die Alte ') and the like. They are not his most polished works ; one might almost say they are his most unpleasant works. His greatest moments occur when he amalgamates polyphony of the Bach order with the ' gallant ' ; when old and new are incorporated insolubly and indis-

tinguishably into a whole. In saying this I am thinking not so much of the Finale of the Jupiter symphony, which is thoughtlessly labelled 'concluding fugue' (whereby an injustice is done both to the fugue and to Mozart), or of the scene with the armed men in the Magic Flute, as of the few closing measures in the Andante of the C-Major quartet, or the Menuet of the G-Minor symphony—the most attractive piece of contrapuntal writing since Bach.

Mozart's combination of 'galant' and 'learned' is so complete that his contemporaries failed to notice this 'rescue of Bach.' It is generally so; the greatest things in an art, when they are not and because they are not 'revolutionary,' escape observation. Wagner was a revolutionary and behaved as one; and consequently a tremendous hubbub arose about him. Mozart and Bach—for in this respect they belong together, though they seem to stand so far apart—were both the reverse of revolutionary. They were much more. They were cultural agents in so far as they were educators. The words of the painter Eugène Delacroix apply to both with equal force: 'The essence of the genial man, and still more his effect, does not depend upon new ideas, but rather upon the conviction that all which went before him was not well enough done.' In regard to both the expression 'genius' is quite wrongly implied.

The age of 'geniuses' comes after Mozart—the nineteenth century; the time at which the Past of the art became a living thing, in a new sense, for the art of the Present. Bach is exhumed. In 1802 J. N. Forkel's biography appears—a work which, for enthusiasm, cannot be surpassed, and which considers the cult of Bach to be a national duty. Publishers begin to notice his works—at first, it is true, only his instrumental works. In 1805 Breitkopf and Härtel issued a Mass for double-choir under Bach's name, which was lauded by the spirited babbler, Friedrich Rochlitz, as 'an obelisk disinterred from the ruins of a gray prehistoric age.' Unfortunately the work was not by Bach. It was not until 1822 that a Cantata of Bach's was reprinted—'Eine feste Burg.' In Saxony and North Germany the lesser cantors and organists commenced to show interest in him, while South Germany (Vienna included) still remains quite unmoved. But Beethoven lives in Vienna. Intellects depart among the creators. Carl Maria von Weber, the composer of the 'Freischütz,' places Bach on the same rung of the ladder with the musical charlatan, the abbé Vogler, and presumably below him. The *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* for 1818 (XX, 652) remarks that Bach's works are 'in no wise devoid of real artistic talent.'

But for Beethoven—who not only knew the 'Well-tempered

'Clavier' but a whole series of other instrumental works by Bach—the same problem arises as with Mozart: that of the adoption and amalgamation of the polyphonic style into his own. We know that quip of Beethoven's concerning himself: that he was 'born obbligato'—i.e., there existed for him no longer any 'filling-up' parts, all subsidiary parts being obbligato and thematically indispensable. This applies well enough to the works of Beethoven's 'middle' period; in the *Eroica* or in the seventh and eighth symphonies, not to mention the string-quartets, every part is literally 'obbligato.' But towards the close of his activity Beethoven feels the necessity for a sterner and more intellectual language: not with Bach's help, but with the assistance of Bach's means of expression—polyphony. Obbligato parts now become converted into contrapuntal voices. The discursive movement, that is to say the movement which Beethoven had earlier constructed to form an exposition of his themes, is transformed into Fugues and Fugati. It is certainly not sacrilegious to say that Beethoven only reached his goal after an almost convulsive struggle; that all these movements—and particularly the magnificent close of the B-flat string-quartet which was subsequently published as an independent work—have something violent about them; a violence not only of expression, but also of style. Moreover, Beethoven here came to grips with a problem upon which the whole of the nineteenth century had repeatedly to try its teeth.

The nineteenth century! This is the century which rediscovered Bach, which in a philosophical sense at least did him justice, which in 1850 undertook an all-embracing edition of Bach's works, and, not without unspeakable efforts brought the task to completion. In 1829 Felix Mendelssohn brings the *Matthew Passion* to a hearing in Berlin and opens a path to the understanding of the Bach of the Passions, of the Mass, of the Magnificat, and of the Cantatas. In Germany it was attempted to disparage this deed of Mendelssohn's—as almost goes without saying, since, they said, Mendelssohn had only plucked the ripe fruit from the tree which his teacher Zelter had planted by his cult of Bach's works in the Berlin *Singakademie*. But if we read Zelter's observations on Bach we shall see that behind sonorous obscurities stupid arrogance and crass ignorance are hidden. Whereas Mendelssohn brought to Bach the highest enthusiasm, understanding, and love. In his feeling and sensibility; not in his creations. Bach's polyphony remains in his works a foreign body. It is an imitation, an archaism. And it remains this throughout the whole of the nineteenth century—with two exceptions: Wagner and Brahms. In the case of Wagner we are thinking naturally of the

Mastersingers with its exposition of a style belonging to an earlier epoch. Generally speaking Wagner's own personal manner in his later works (for up to Lohengrin inclusive his style is plainly homophonic), is not polyphonic, but rather combinatory. Wagner was too intellectual a man for polyphony. But in the Mastersingers he secures with his highly personal imitation of Bach's polyphony a contrast with his own 'free' style; he raises himself thereby to a point at which he seems to say that the Mastersinger-style is stabilised as the normal working style—even at his own expense. It is one of the greatest creative works of the nineteenth century. It was this century's only opportunity for taking possession of Bach, who otherwise would stand a stranger and unapproachable in distant oblivion.

With Brahms it is, though not in the German Requiem or even in the Song of Triumph, that the style of Bach (and that of Handel) is reannexed by the nineteenth century. Brahms is, so to say, most Bach-like where he does not write archaically. He is Bach-like in the Finale of the Chaconne (Symphony in E-Minor); he is it also in the slow middle movement of the clarinet quartet. He makes a contact with Bach in one characteristic—otherwise lost for the nineteenth century—that of masterly craftsmanship.

Brahms lived to see the practical completion of the great Bach-edition—in other words, lived to witness all the surviving works of Bach being made known to the world. His age realises its task and obligations: to make Bach's works live again. And they do become known, even if they do not really live. Round about 1850 Hans von Bülow still considered Bach's cembalo concerto in D-Minor to be 'non-music' (*Letters*, III, 28) and hesitated to play it. To-day it is almost as popular and well-known as Beethoven's 'Emperor.' The Matthew Passion or that of St. John can be heard in Easter-week, and the Christmas Oratorio resounds at Advent, in every German town. Every Sunday a Cantata of Bach's is given during divine service in the Leipzig church of St. Thomas. Liturgical service is in such cases not to be clearly separated from an artistic divine service—that is to say, from the aesthetical. It is self-evident that Bach's Cantatas, written for a definite period and for a special day, are no longer possible in either the concert-hall or the Church. In the concert-hall we respect them as works of art, for their musical meaning, and for their antique majesty. They are still used in the churches because the Church has no longer sufficient vitality, as a cultural force, to create for itself a present-day living music of its own. All the same, we still perform Bach! We can say that no age

—not even his own—has ever known him more intimately than the present.

Bach exercises a far deeper influence upon the creative generation of to-day than upon practical music generally. The old classicism of Bach has dethroned the classic. The younger musicians of the present day have thrown the classics overboard with the romantics; for the former make a path for all the 'evil characteristics' of the romantic age—the Subjective, pathos, sentimentality, richness of colouring, and the Descriptive. The first step is a return to Bach's forms. The sonata-form is no longer the model to be copied, but rather the concerto. One desires no longer to have the exposition—the 'dramatic' maintenance of themes and motives—but rather to cultivate the purely free play of music or of music's forces. One returns to the apparently neutral; to the language of Bach which appears to be less overloaded with feeling. One seeks, as Bach seemingly did, to withdraw behind the work. One strives to copy his even, nameless, expression—if the paradox be permitted. One achieves thereby only rigidity and a mask-like expression—the curse of all imitation and of all borrowing.

For Bach permits of no imitation. Bach—and this is his unique position—stands with all his personality above the conception of the personal. He is so great, as the culminating point in an evolution that was centuries old, as a musical creative force, that he appears before us not as a musician, but rather as *the* musician. His work ranges in the æther of the super-individual. With him instrumental music and vocal music are stylistically not to be distinguished; both have grown from a single root—his organ music. Neither can his sacred and his secular works be distinguished by their contents; his jubilation for a prince is the same as his jubilation for God; and his music to an elegiac ode in honour of some petty potentate also serves him for a Passion. When Bach speaks, Music seems to speak. The work of all the other masters, without exception, is arbitrary; that of Bach involuntary. Bach takes themes from the hands of other musicians, and only when he develops them do they exhibit their natural growth. He stands above the conventional conception of 'originality.' He also stands, in spite of his orthodoxy, far above the conceptions of the confessional. He writes an ideal work which cannot find sufficient space in any church—the 'High Mass'; it is no Catholic, and still less a Protestant creation (Beethoven's 'Missa' is much more Catholic)—but rather a consciousness of God, a very representation of God. When he is quite free—in the Inventions and Symphonies, in the Preludes and Fugues of the 'Well-tempered

Clavier'—he creates that timeless counterpart to the spaceless Mass. Here there is nothing 'galant' and nothing 'learned.' Under a didactic cloak things have been here created that are destined to live for an eternity of art. No age will completely master them, and Bach in music will be as great, as obscure, as vital, and as inexhaustible in five hundred years as Dante is in Italian poetry after five or six hundred years.

ALFRED EINSTEIN.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of MUSIC AND LETTERS.

SIR,

In your April issue, in publishing a reviewer's judgment on my book *The Puritans and Music*, you attach an editorial note referring to an article 'offered for publication in this magazine,' which, as you say, contains 'a mass of first hand evidence,' and on the strength of this article (which you do not, I am sorry to note, feel able to offer your readers the opportunity of seeing for themselves) you suggest that they should regard as still open the question my book purports definitely to settle.

The impression thus created seems to me as unfortunate as the step you have taken is unusual, and I ask you generously to accord me a few lines of space to state that by the courtesy of the author of the article in question I have been supplied with a copy of it, that I do not find in it anything whatever that in the very slightest impairs the thesis of my book, and that, as its author knows, should he succeed in discovering a means of publishing it I shall be delighted to have the opportunity of replying to every suggestion it contains.

I remain, yours faithfully,

PERCY A. SCHOLES.

Morley College for Working Men and Women,
61, Westminster Bridge Road, S.E.1.
March 8, 1935.

To the Editor of MUSIC AND LETTERS.

It is proposed to raise a fund for the purpose of establishing a memorial to Gustav Holst. It seems particularly fitting that this memorial should take the form of helping to develop the study of music in Morley College for Working Men and Women, where at present adequate equipment is difficult to obtain.

It was at Morley College that Holst taught and inspired successive generations of students for so many years. It is therefore suggested to establish a music room to be called the 'Gustav Holst Music Room,' as part of the new wing about to be erected there. The room will be equipped with a grand pianoforte, appropriate sound-proof devices, &c. Should the sum collected permit, additional rooms could be added for a music library and teaching room. A Committee for

this purpose, of which I am Chairman, has been formed at Morley College.

We feel that such a memorial as this will be one of which Holst himself would have approved, and which will in some measure help to carry on his work. The proposal has the support of the following:—

Sir Hugh Allen.
Dr. Adrian Boult.
The Bishop of Chichester.
Dr. Davison (of Harvard, U.S.A.).
Mr. Gerald Forty.
Miss Gray (ex-High Mistress of St. Paul's Girls' School).
Mrs. Eva M. Hubback (Principal, Morley College).
Dr. Mackail, O.M.
Mr. John Masefield.
Dr. W. Gillies Whittaker.

Though naturally we should be very grateful for large donations, yet since we want everyone who loved and admired Holst and his work to participate, the smallest sum will be welcome. Subscriptions should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. D. Marblacy Jones, Barclays Bank, 84, Rosebery Avenue, E.C.1, or may be given personally to the Secretary of Morley College. Cheques should be made payable to the Gustav Holst Memorial Fund. Any further information may be obtained from either of the Hon. Secretaries: Mrs. F. C. Vokes and Mrs. O. Western, c/o Morley College.

Yours faithfully,

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS.

REGISTER OF BOOKS ON MUSIC

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- Bach.** Bülow, Paul: *Johann Sebastian Bach. Dem Meister evangelischer Kirchenmusik zu seinem 250. Geburtstag.* Mit 7 Abbildungen. pp. 63. Schloessmann: Leipzig und Hamburg, 1935. 1.20 M.
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C.B.O.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

La route d'un musicien: Georges Migot. Par Pierre Wolff. Paris: Leduc. n.p.

This sympathetic note upon a modern French composer withholds more than it tells. It gives no biographical details and a perusal of these enthusiastically phrased pages says nothing of who was Migot's teacher, where he studied, his date or place of birth. The manner of the book is laudatory to a degree that is in danger of verging on the fabulous and the whole production (with the exception of the *catalogue raisonné* at the end, which we take to be reasonably complete and exact) is too vague to be of any real value for purposes of study. A few music illustrations would have helped in that direction. Migot appears to have a scientific turn of mind, leading him to researches into acoustics, or so we presume from a sentence which tells us that one branch of music 'à laquelle il a donné ses soins fervents est l'acoustique.' From that we are to gather that he has arrived at 'une doctrine harmonique passionnante' which may or may not be so, though what one would like to know is what 'fervour' has to do with acoustics and 'passion' with harmony. There is a full list of Migot's works, each section being prefaced with a minute introduction. Here also generalities reign and one would willingly exchange a sentence such as 'Ce n'est pas la moins étonnante réussite de cet art constructeur que de parvenir à asséoir sur un timbre unique la plénitude d'un équilibre sonore' for two words that could reveal something definite about this music.

SCOTT GODDARD.

Nouvelle Histoire de la Musique. Par Henry Prunières. Paris: Rieder. 25 fr.

Histoire de la musique illustrée. Par René Dumesnil. Paris: Plon. 60 fr.

Illustrierte Musikgeschichte (Emil Naumann). Neu-gestaltet von Eugen Schmitz. Berlin: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft. 12.50 M.

The first volume of Henry Prunières's History ends with the close of the sixteenth century and the different strands of musical style which the author has traced during the progress of the volume are secured, each in its own province, ready to be taken in hand in succeeding volumes. The matter has gone fairly regularly by countries with France placed not unexpectedly in the front rank. By an adroit differentiation between 'la polyphonie savante du Xlii^e siècle dont est sortie toute la merveilleuse floraison de la musique occidentale' and 'la polyphonie embryonnaire du haut

Moyen-âge' the author has been able to claim for France the position of prime generator of Polyphony. Léonin and Pérotin take their place at the head of the composers of the Notre-Dame school and thereafter it is from France that the stream of musical development flows outward to the rest of Europe. In turn the author describes the state of music in Italy, Germany, Spain and Portugal. A note placed at the end of the volume gives it to be understood that English music at the end of the sixteenth century (a period already treated fully in relation to the music of the rest of Europe) with its 'magnifique école instrumentale' is to be dealt with in the second volume, as being more truly related to the music of the next century. Where the sixteenth-century English madrigalists and church composers are to find a place in a scheme of this kind is not clear. For the rest the author has compiled a book for which the reader should be grateful. It is seldom that so much pleasure has been had in reading a historical survey, a fact which can be accounted for by the extraordinarily easy and clear literary style in which it is cast. An index is promised at the end of the final volume. There are some excellent illustrations, though for those one turns to the other two books mentioned here. The vogue of the illustrated musical history is on the increase and it is not hard to find the reason. With the quick vulgarisation of music, in late years, there has come a demand for information in a simple, assimilable form, and the eye, already trained to observe while the ear is still far behind in correlating the more organised manifestations in its particular medium, is called in to help. Between these two illustrated histories there is little to choose. The German book (compressing into one volume what Naumann issued fifty years ago in two and bringing the whole up to date) is rather more comprehensive and its letterpress is slightly more informative. Turning to modern English music one finds each book doing its best with a matter that hardly seems to be in its possession. The French volume mentions seven men and having sketched in a courteous gesture the 'véritable renaissance symphonique' which has come to pass here adds the surprising piece of news that 'l'activité de la *Musical League* y a beaucoup contribué.' The German treatise mentions three men—Walton 'ein unbedingter Vertreter des Atonalismus . . . mit viel beachteter Kammermusik,' Cyril Scott (four lines) and Bax (two). Probably if we had had to reduce modern German or French music to tabloid form we should have been equally inept.

SCOTT GODDARD.

Beecham and Pharaoh. By Ethel Smyth. Chapman & Hall. 6s.

Of the two opuscules here arbitrarily and incongruously wedded, the second only happens to be by a musician. It is shockingly amusing. For, as Dame Ethel's youngest sister tells her in a letter quoted here, 'You have always been a law unto yourself, and have approached with a very unusual directness subjects and points of view that other people keep rather under sealed lips and veiled eyes.' But it has little to do with music. The first part is a different matter. It professes to be (and is) a sort of Brock's Benefit portrait of our Thomas. The portrait is probably more lifelike than most such performances

and the fireworks are as brilliant as any Dame Ethel has ever given us, though the illumination thrown on her subject's character naturally has the defects incidental to pyrotechnical lighting. Stray squibs and rockets fly off in all directions, a few rather damp, most of them crackling crisply. And sometimes Dame Ethel gives us another sort of crack, that of the hammer on the nail: 'I cannot agree with Delius [that] the English race is lacking in emotion, the essential part of music']. 'I fancy if anything we err on the other side. But when it comes to *expressing our emotions in terms of music*, that is quite another matter.' Three unpublished Delius letters are printed here. Indeed the glimpses of Delius, fleeting as they are, have more permanent interest than the bulk of the book.

GERALD ABRAHAM.

A Background for Domenico Scarlatti. By Sachervell Sitwell. Faber and Faber. 5s. net.

The title precisely describes and defines the book. Mr. Sitwell is quite aware that he is giving us a 'Hamlet' with the Prince only occasionally peeping round the wings. It could hardly be otherwise, technical discussion of the music being excluded. As Mr. Sitwell says, 'the precise information that is available upon Scarlatti would cover only some couple of pages.' He has used that little very well, but the greater part of his book consists of picturesque scene-painting in virtuoso prose. It is a curious, fantastic, colourful background that he has to paint—eighteenth century Naples and the Spanish court of Fernando VII—'a world which we might call a locked cabinet of taste.' But, on the whole, it is a world more interesting to the dilettante than to the artist.

GERALD ABRAHAM.

Rimsky-Korsakov. By Markevitch. Editions Rieder, Paris, 20 f.

A good short life of Rimsky-Korsakov is so badly needed in some easily accessible Western language, and this addition to the well-known series of 'Maitres de la Musique' promises so well with its forty pages of interesting and beautifully reproduced illustrations, that one is all the more disappointed on finding it so much less satisfactory than it might have been. For not only is there no attempt at criticism of Korsakov's music, but the biography is little more than a précis of the composer's 'Memoirs,' with liberal quotations. The author has used hardly any sources other than the 'Memoirs' and has obviously relied on one of the earlier editions in which the numerous errors remained uncorrected. When Rimsky-Korsakov gets into a hopeless muddle with his dates (*e.g.* the date of the collaborative 'Mlada,' now perfectly familiar to all students of Russian music), the author blindly follows him. Markevitch covers the ground so fluently and picturesquely that his book might have provided a first-rate summary of the composer's autobiography for readers who neither need nor have the time to wade through the original. But rapidity and picturesqueness are usually the enemies of accuracy, and

this book is no exception to the rule. Markevitch tells us, for instance, that Korsakov 'remembered later with regret that he had caused the dismissal of a poor old bandmaster who had nothing against him but his great age'; actually Korsakov simply remarks that he dismissed the unfortunate veteran because he was unable to detect persistent wrong notes! There are no very serious errors in M. Markevitch's book, but far too many trivial ones of that kind. Some of his blunders—for instance, the confusion of the polonaise in 'Boris' with 'l'acte polonais' (p. 47)—suggests that his knowledge of his subject is very superficial indeed.

GERALD ABRAHAM.

Philosophie de l'Expression Musicale. By E. Stiévenard. Schott Frères, Paris. pp. 67.

Precepts on Musical Expression would have been the more correct title of this little book. Its three chapters deal with metre, rhythm and phrasing, and as an elementary introduction are clear and helpful. They would have been more helpful had more space been devoted to expression in regard to breathing, bowing or touch. The examples, in which vocal and instrumental music, Bach and Massenet, scherzo and opera, are found cheek by jowl, make one wonder to whom these precepts are addressed. Primarily the book was written for 'the average executant' who 'pays no attention to expression unless it be noted'—the reference is to performers in the French provinces—and in the hope of restoring a musical sensibility coarsened by jazz and the 'musique chinoise' of 'a musician of the new school.' That reference is to Debussy!

E. LOCKSPFEISER.

Sinn und Wesen der Abendländischen Mehrstimmigkeit. By Felix Salzer. Saturn-Vaerlag, Wien. pp. 241.

Except to a few cloistered students the music of the early polyphonic period up to the sixteenth century is still very little known. What a beautiful introduction might be written by someone sufficiently them-minded to catch a glimpse of that far-off mysticism! Instead of which this music stifles under the weight of heavy treatises. The present work is no exception. Based on a certain preconceived philosophy it is anything but clarifying.

Herr Salzer conceives European music 'not as a succession of many changing styles but as the unfolding of one style, the Music-style of the West.' This flying in the face of rational analysis sends us to Spengler on whose 'Untergang des Abendlandes' Herr Salzer has admittedly based his approach. Spengler it was who envisaged 'deep uniformities' between contrapuntal music and credit economics 'as also' between the space-perspective of Western oil-painting and the conquest of space by rail-road, telephone and long-range weapon.' Such fanciful comparisons are of course purely intuitive. Herr Salzer's intuition tells him 'that we are approaching the end with giant strides,' the end, presumably, of 'the organic development of Western civilisation.' There is no need to dwell here on this morbid pessimism. Herr

Salzer's roots are apparently in the outworn sinister nihilism of Nietzsche.

An accompanying supplement contains examples from Pérotin, Pierre Aubry, Guillaume de Machaut, Okhegem, Obrecht, Josquin des Prés, Lasso, Hassler and J. S. Bach. Any appreciation we might get from the text is, however, usually clouded by such vague verbiage as 'All moving parts are prolongations of an original phrase and explain to some extent the distance between the composition and its ultimate significance.' On almost every page occurs the word 'Auskomponierung.' It means 'the extension or expansion of sound into time.' As applied to the florid writing that succeeded note-against-note *organum* the word expresses an idea of some poetic value. But no such poetic idea can be a key to a whole view of polyphony. The main fault of this book is that it argues from the general to the particular, a form of logic suited perhaps to a science like geometry but eminently unsuitable in musical history.

E. LOCKSPEISER.

The Playing of Chamber Music. By George Stratton and Alan Frank. Oxford University Press. 3s. 6d.

A fair amount of practical advice is given to chamber music students in the 70 odd pages of this little volume. A bar-to-bar commentary is provided of three quartets—Mozart's in C major K. 465; Beethoven's Op. 59 No. 3 in the same key and Debussy's Op. 10 in G minor. So detailed an analysis may seem unnecessary and even to smack of pedantry. The authors however avoid the charge by their frank admission that in matters of interpretation no two authorities will agree.

F. BONAVIA.

Massenet. By Alfred Bruneau. Librairie Delagrave. 10 fr.

It is possible that this short account of Massenet by his pupil and admirer, Alfred Bruneau will mean much more to their compatriots than it can mean to us. One has the impression that the author is addressing an audience which already knows the subject from A to Z. In England, where Massenet is practically forgotten, something more will be necessary before the average reader can be expected to accept what Bruneau has to say. Massenet, he tells us, was a very witty man but he quotes only two instances of a happy retort. That seems rather little to establish a reputation for wit. Men who lay no claim to it whatever have contributed more to the amusement of their fellows. On the other hand those who already know a number of Massenet's witty sayings may be glad enough to add more to their collection.

The discussion on Massenet's works is for the foreign reader, equally desultory. Some of the quotations can convey nothing to those who do not know the work from which they are taken. Five or six bars of the finest melody can mean little deprived of their harmony. Even when the harmony is added, as in a quotation from *Werther*, the reader who never heard the passage in the orchestra, cannot possibly imagine what its true worth may be. The effect the scene makes in the theatre depends almost entirely on the happy blend of orchestral colour. Deprived of it, it becomes characterless and undistinguished.

It speaks highly for Bruneau's integrity that after his own, he gives Saint Saens' obituary notice of Massenet. This is by far the most interesting and critical appreciation of the man and his work in the volume. Saint Saens was said to be Massenet's rival. The article shows him to have been a critical but friendly admirer whose reservations were due not to jealousy but to a higher conception of a composer's calling.

F. B.

Suono e Ritmo. By Emilia Gubitosi. Ed. Curci. Naples.

This is a second edition of a text book on the elements of musical theory. It gives the student a fair outline of harmony; counterpoint it hardly touches upon at all. The volume is valuable enough in its way but one wonders whether it is worth while to burden the student's mind with a host of names of writers and musicians who happen to have expressed an opinion on the point at issue. Musical quotations cannot be too plentiful; single sentences from various writers are more likely to cause confusion. For instance, the student who reads that 'Couperin, Rameau, Mattheson, F. E. Bach, Tartini, Geminiani and others wrote on embellishments' can have but a hazy notion of their value in history. Their contributions can only be dealt with adequately when the history of music is taught; theory is concerned more with practice than invention and development.

F. B.

L'Interpretation de la Musique Française. Par Eugene Borrel.
Librairie Felix Alean. 15 fr.

This useful volume contains just what the interpreter of French music in general and of French music from Lulli to the revolution in particular, should know before exploring its vast territories. The immediate concern of the author is the art of his own country and of a special period. Foreign countries and methods however come also within range at times, and since any one period is the father of the following age, it follows that the appeal of M. Borrel's work is wider than its title would seem to suggest.

The characteristics of French music are clearly set forth in a chapter in which various writers, known and unknown, including the famous Saint-Evremond, explain their point of view and contrast the style of the French with that of the Italians. The French prized grace, finesse in composition and execution; the Italians, force and passion. The reverse side is well put by a French violist of the time: 'We sin through want; the Italians through excess.' This chapter provides a curious commentary on the common belief that music is in 'international' language. After reading M. Borrel we feel inclined to think that it is far less international than the art of the mime and much more easily misunderstood. Singing on the other hand appears to have been what it now is in all times and in all Latin countries. The tricks of the modern singer to which critics take exception are here catalogued and given their proper names. The 'sob,' the 'explosive h' and a dozen besides are recorded as 'fleuriettes, fredon, traits, fusées, tirades, trainées.' 'Tirades' and 'trainées' ought to find a

place in the dictionaries of Fleet Street—they are very suggestive. Fault was found with singers not when they used these tricks but only when they abuse them, and so sensitive a musician as Daquin is warm in praise of a musician who could 'season' an old minuet so dexterously that 'though written many years ago, it sounds quite modern.'

Abuse brought reaction in its train. Serious musicians grew restive when it was discovered that embellishment reduced all music to the same level of expression and to a meaningless display of virtuosity. It was said of one musician that he 'enveloped' the theme in so many superfluous ornamentations that it became impossible to distinguish one theme from another: 'He will play six sonatas and they will sound exactly alike.' Amongst the revolters were Gluck and Lulli who dismissed from his orchestra any violinist who dared to spoil the true significance of a phrase by portamento and 'mewling.' How deep the rot had penetrated may be imagined from the fact that it became necessary to urge singers to distinguish between embellishments and to warn them that what sounded effective in the song of a love-sick shepherd would not be proper to the aria of enraged Medea.

A short but adequate summary of Rameau's contribution to the study of harmony completes this stimulating survey of musical fashions and manners in France from 1650 to 1800.

F. B.

Die Zauberflöte. Unbekannte Handschriften und seltene Drucke aus der Frühzeit von Mozart's Oper. Herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Fritz Bruckner. pp. 214. Gilhofer & Ranschburg: Vienna.

The history of *Die Zauberflöte* is the story of the gradual triumph of Mozart over Schikaneder. Herr Bruckner has attempted, not exactly to reverse the process, but to help the reader to recapture something of the atmosphere of the days when the opera was still regarded as a real work of collaboration, in which the share of the librettist and actor-manager was at least as important as that of the composer. Of the texts which he has resuscitated five are by Schikaneder himself and the rest concern him more closely than they concern Mozart. Schikaneder's own contributions will scarcely enhance his reputation. He may have been a first-rate man of the theatre but he was a very mediocre poet. His additional verses written for special performances of *Die Zauberflöte* are the veriest doggerel and their only interest to-day lies in their topical allusions. Nor does his libretto for *Das Labyrinth*, described as 'der Zauberflöte zweiter Theil,' and first produced, with music by Winter, in June, 1798, rise much above the level of the pantomime rhymster. It is best read as an illuminating lesson in the art of how to write a sequel. 'Papagno was a great hit?' we can hear Schikaneder saying. 'Then let us have more Papagenos. Let us bring in his long-lost parents and his brothers and sisters. And that chorus of priests. Why not some female priests too, this time? . . . Otherwise, I think, the mixture as before.' Needless to say, the opera was a great success.

But his contemporaries were not content to leave Schikaneder to be his own parodist. A number of travesties of *Die Zauberflöte* testified at once to the popularity of the work and to the mixture of affection

and amusement with which it was regarded. The specimen which Herr Brukner prints, *Die Zauberflöte travestirt in Knittelversen*, dates from 1803 and is remarkable for being also a 'parody' in the old sense of the word—a new text to an old tune, for it was so written that it could be performed with almost the whole of Mozart's original music. It is an amusing reading, but we may perhaps take it as a sign of the growing reverence in which the composer was now held that though it was submitted to and passed the censor it never came to a performance.

Of more direct interest to students of Mozart are a number of occasional pieces called forth by Schikaneder's activities as producer and manager. As samples of these, which were almost always anonymous, Herr Brukner reproduces four dialogues in verse, in all of which Schikaneder and Mozart himself are the chief interlocutors. The first three, which deal with the rival production of *Die Zauberflöte* at the Kärntnertortheater (its first performance at one of the Court theatres) in 1801, and discuss its merits and demerits in comparison with those of the original production, are of particular value for the early history of the opera. They even yield a slender harvest to the biographer. It is perhaps a trifling addition to our knowledge to learn that Schikaneder, like Hamlet, was 'fat and seant of breath,' but it is welcome to have such assurance as these writers can give on such vexed questions as Schikaneder's right to be considered the sole author of the *Zauberflöte* libretto, and, what is of more importance, the nature of his dealings with Mozart. Negative evidence is never conclusive, but it is worth noting that none of them even hints at a rival claimant to the text or displays any knowledge of the ugly rumour that Schikaneder cheated Mozart of his composer's fee and so was in part responsible for the penury in which he died. These points, and others of equal interest, are fully treated by the editor in a scholarly introduction which covers the whole of Schikaneder's career from his birth at Regensburg in 1751 to his death, mad and penniless, in 1812.

C. B. OLDMAN.

Charles Villiers Stanford. By Harry Plunket Greene. Arnold & Co. London. 15s. net.

This is a rare book, the biography of a musician without a dull page. Everything Mr. Greene tells about Stanford's life and personality is invested with a living interest and with charm. Read, for instance, the chapter which tells the romance of his marriage. The book sparkles with wit and humour—and contains just the right number of amusing incidents and quotable 'mots' about Stanford, and the many people of note who came into his life. But the object of the book is never lost sight of—to portray Stanford as he really was, as man, teacher, writer, conductor and composer. Mr. Greene deals himself with the songs, as no one else could, for most of them were written for him, and almost in collaboration with him. He speaks of them with insight and complete understanding. He tells also the story of the operas, and the evil fate which seemed to pursue them, with the exception of Shamus o'Brien—future historians will probably add 'and of The Travelling Companion.' Mr. Dunhill's

chapter on the choral and orchestral works and Sir Edward Bairstow's on the Church Music are all that could be desired. It is to be regretted that more space was not given to the part songs—a sphere in which Stanford has not been surpassed by anyone.

Mr. Greene has been wise in dealing quite frankly with the side of 'the tall, dark, dour man,' which made enemies. He had a dangerous and too ready tongue and a more dangerous pen. But only a few understood that an Irishman loves a fight and the interchange of hot and hasty words, and then forgets all about it, expecting his opponent to do the same. Stanford was perpetually giving offence without knowing it. When frankly tackled and proved wrong, he was all gentleness and humility. Often those with whom he was apparently at daggers drawn found that he was doing them a good turn behind their backs. When injured himself, he was often the one who forgave—but not always, as those who read of the gradual and at last final estrangement from the University which he loved will learn. His quarrels with Parry were frequent in his later years at the R.C.M., and serious. Fortunately there was a peacemaker always at hand. The insight, sympathy and fair-mindedness with which Mr. Greene handles these unhappy conflicts is a delightful feature of this book. Thoughtful readers will know when they have finished it, that the real Stanford was kindly of heart, simple, a true friend (not afraid to say the disagreeable thing if he thought it necessary), and in all that concerned his art, faithful to his high ideals.

I may add, perhaps, that Hans v. Bülow once spoke to me of the Irish Symphony as '*Ein höchst poetisches Werk.*'

WALTER FORD.

Practical Musical Criticism. Oscar Thompson. Witmark Educational Publications, New York. \$2.00.

People who go to concerts and read press notices would do well to read this book. It was not written for them, but for budding aspirants to the career of musical critic—and, perhaps, for those who, being in full bloom, were still open to refreshing showers of reminders.

The book reads very matter-of-fact ('pragmatic' is a pet word of the author) and we feel that the cards are on the table. Here is an idea of some of them.

The critic serves his paper (a hierarchy) which in its turn caters (in competition with other papers) for a public which to some extent it makes. That often means a razor-edge of policy.

The first thing that happens, on the sounding of a note of music is (excluding desert islands) criticism. "*Criticism is!* There's the long and short of it," says Mr. Thompson, pointing out that spoken criticisms—by artists and composers as well as by mere listeners and critics—circulate very widely and irresponsibly.

If criticism means or effects anything, it is desirable to have a record and a standard, even those short-lived and often pinched utterances of the daily press.

Music is still 'news'—though, as things are, it is not always so because it is music. Personalities count. There is a thing called

publicity. There are financial aspects—grievous sometimes in their incidence upon art.

We have all thought vaguely about these matters—*e.g.* newspapers, their advertisements; 'press cuttings'; the possible effects of concert-notices (in U.S.A., apparently, 'reviews') on (a) the demeanour of the public at box-offices, (b) the sensitive souls of artists to whom praise is nourishment and dispraise not welcome; appraisals of new works; the infinite tedium of hearing the same music *ad infinitum*, and the travail that does not always bring to birth a new thought from that tedium's womb. All these things and many others, but none superfluously, from his point of view or ours, Mr. Thompson expounds and (admittedly) re-expounds. His argument is close and his phrases are trenchant. 'There are some things the critic should say with a smile. The reader cannot see his face. His words must convey the good will behind them. Now and then he will damn, with flat-footed assertion that can never be mistaken for faint praise. But these occasions too, will afford him the opportunity to damn like a gentleman.'

There seems to us to be in this well-printed book nothing but what is reasonable, logical, and philosophical.

MURRAY MARSDEN.

Edvard Grieg. By D. M. Johansen. Gyldendal Norsk Forlag. 1934.

This biography of 450 pages gives an authoritative account of the life and work of Edvard Grieg. It has had a good reception in Norway, and Mme. Grieg has expressed her appreciation of it. The author, Monrad Johansen, is a well-known Norwegian composer, who is definitely 'national' in his music and, since he possesses a kindred spirit to Grieg's, is the best possible man to give the book the right atmosphere, and the great musician's work a correct interpretation.

When one considers that Delius and Percy Grainger were two of Grieg's closest friends, and that he thought they understood him better than any other people he had met outside Norway, this work will certainly prove to be of great interest to all lovers and students of folklore or 'national music.' Grieg was no adapter of folk-songs—out of his 125 Lieder only one has a borrowed melody. He drew his inspirations principally from the mountains and fjords of his own country.

The author has spared neither labour nor time in his researches, in fact he has given us a most interesting study of a whole epoch. To know that epoch one must study its art, and Grieg is here presented to us as a living, fighting, suffering and thoroughly vital personality.

The first chapters deal with the Grieg family. It is of interest that Edvard Grieg's great grandfather, Alexander Greig, was a Scot from Aberdeen, became a Norwegian citizen in 1779 and, before he died in 1803, was British Consul General in Bergen. To secure the correct pronunciation in Norwegian, the family name was changed from *Greig* to *Grieg*.

The book reviews his childhood in a cultured and musical home; the family's friendship with the famous Norwegian violinist, Ole Bull, through whose advice Grieg was sent to study in Leipzig 1858-62; and

his marriage to the singer, Nina Hagerup, who became the perfect interpreter of her husband's songs. Grieg's compositions are most efficiently and interestingly analysed by Hr. Monrad Johansen, and I think all Norwegians hope that the book will be issued in England by the publisher, who has given us Ibsen, Hamsun, Bojer and Undset in such splendid translations.

What crowded and enthusiastic audiences Grieg had in the capitals of Europe, and how he loved his concerts in Queens Hall in '88, when the papers after their great success wrote that a veritable Grieg fever was prevalent in London! Those were happy times for music!

K. G. HALS.

Dr. Sanford Terry adds the following note to his review in the April number.

In my review of Dr. Werner Danckert's 'Beiträge zur Bachkritik' I wrote that he accepted the authenticity of the Sonata in G minor for Violin and Cembalo, but concluded that it was originally composed for Flute and Cembalo, on the reasonable ground that Bach would not have written for the Violin music which never touches the G string. In fact Dr. Danckert dissents from these opinions, which are expressed by Leo Balet the editor of a recent edition of the Sonata. On 'typological grounds' Dr. Danckert rejects Bach's authorship and attributes the work to one or other of Bach's two elder sons—Friedemann or Carl Philipp.

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

The following abbreviations have been used: [O] Oxford University Press,
[S] Schott, [B] Bote und Bock.

Songs

Finzi, Gerald. *The Sigh. Budmouth Dears.* Two from *A young man's exhortation*. We still feel that the former is infinitely the better song, though both are well written and the second of them will certainly be popular with those of a hearty turn of mind. [O]

Harrhy, Edith. *Pierrot's cradle song. Collette.* These settings are singable but musically lack individuality. [Allan, Melbourne and Boosey]

Ireland, John. *Songs sacred and profane.* In the first category is a setting of Alice Meynell's 'The Advent' that gives to the words a background of the kind they should have, restrained, with a hint of urgency for climax in the middle and thereafter a return to the initial mood. Sylvia Townsend Warner's 'Hymn for a Child' has wit that the music reflects without undue emphasis. The difficulty of setting a succession of short couplets—speaking without bias, 'He reviewed Elias; Said the dogs did well, Eating Jezebel'—would deter most composers. In the second category are two love songs, one in a highly coloured dress, difficult for both voice and instrument, but interesting for either ('My fair'), and the other a more simple setting of Yeats's 'Down by the salley gardens'; following which is a gay 'Soldier's return' and a frankly profane 'Scapegoat.' [S]

Kilpinen, Yrjö. Forty-three songs by the modern Finnish composer. The picture songs, such as 'Marienkirche zu Danzig,' 'Im Walde liegt ein stiller See,' show a fine power in seizing the outer generalities of a poem. That is admirably done. What more there is to discover, time bringing with it closer acquaintance may reveal. At present one sees no more. Kilpinen comes within sight of Wolf, has little of Brahms's lyricism, none of Richard Strauss's brightness, none of Sibelius's profundity. He planes above the words in most of these songs, charmingly in 'Von zwei Rosen' and again in 'Vorfrühling.' In 'Nachts auf Posten' he makes a moving picture and in 'Auf einen verfallenen Kirchhof' he again brings the outward semblance of material things before the listener with a sure touch. One hesitates to say more until one has heard more and heard them often. There probably is something still more worth listening for than the superficial attractiveness that at present is all one finds. [B]

Peterkin, Norman. Five songs, all of them pleasingly written for the voice and set with care and insight. Walter de la Mare's 'The

song of secret' and Rupert Brooke's 'All suddenly the wind comes soft' are both admirable in the way a sensation is caught and gently held to without insistence but strongly enough to give each song its own character. Fiona Macleod's 'Song of Fionula' is another successful setting. The Irish folk tale 'The little red hen' will possibly seem on the long side, unless one can find a more than usually able singer who can touch it in lightly and swiftly. 'My fidil is singing' has a hint of the domestic song of two reigns ago; a shadow hangs over it and it has less of the free gait of the other songs in this set. Perhaps the words are responsible. [O]

Karpeles, Maud. *Folksongs from Newfoundland*. The collecting and editing of these songs, in the first instance a labour of piety, has been brought to a successful conclusion, in witness of which there is this highly interesting and instructive volume of thirty songs. Above all Miss Karpeles is to be congratulated on the wisdom she has shown in her choice of the arrangers of the pianoforte accompaniments. All of these are carefully done, many of them are of particularly fine workmanship.

SCOTT GODDARD.

REVIEWS OF PERIODICALS

La Rossegna Musicale. Turin. July-August, 1934.

A. Einstein: *The Florentine Beginnings of Monody.* L. Parigi: *On Musical Habit.* Nardo Ballo: *Musical Criticism in the Nineteenth Century.* Dr. Einstein discusses the work four little-known Florentine composers of the period immediately before the coming of the *musiche nuove*: Giovanni Animuccia (d. 1571), Francesco Cortecchia (d. 1571), Alessandro Striggio (d. 1587?) and Luca Bati (d. 1608). In their madrigals and other polyphonic compositions, Einstein finds many premonitions of the coming reign of monody. Bati's madrigals (1594), he says, are essentially *musiche nuove*, in so far as pieces for several voices could be 'new music.' Better, they are *modern* music, for the term 'nuove musiche' should be reserved for monody.

September-October.

E. Borrelli: *The Word-Tone Drama.* A. della Corte: *The Musical Education of the New Generations (Concerts in Schools).* A. Macha-berg: *Note on Popular Music in France.* Edward Hanslick: *On the Beautiful in Music (continued).* Perhaps the most interesting feature of Ardrea della Corte's article on the correlation of musical with general cultural education is the three specimen programmes, each timed to about an hour and three-quarters and covering the history of music from the Greeks or Hebrews to the present day. Hopelessly inadequate as such surveys must necessarily be, it should nevertheless be very instructive to hear a rapid run through, designed on these lines, for the examples are most happily and thoughtfully chosen.

November-December.

M. Bontempelli: *Meditations concerning Music.* A. Einstein: *Messer Anton Francesco Doni's 'Dialogo della musica.'* F. Fano: *The Problem of Musical Criticism once more.* G. Roncaglia: *G. G. Combini, Romantic Quartettist.* E. Borrelli: *The Word-Tone-Drama (concluded).* If ever a composer had a right to be called a romantic, it was Giovanni Giuseppe Combini (1746-1825). Captured by Barbary pirates in his youth, composing prolifically and living riotously in middle age, dying in extreme poverty, Combini tasted most of life's savours. And he was a romantic also in his music, which Guido Roncaglia here examines technically. Boccherini's contemporary (and rival in prolificacy), Combini possessed 'a new romantic sensitiveness' expressed even in his tempo indications: *Allegro amoroso*,

Allegro con vaghezza, Allegro con nobilità, and so on. A minor master, but one who would evidently repay study.

January-February, 1935.

G. Parrain: *Vincenzo Bellini (a critical essay)*. R. Paoli: *The Sacred Music of Our Day*. H. F. Redlich: *On the Modern Edition of Monteverdi's Works*. M. Rivaldi: *Dramatic and Musical Values of Verdi's 'Simon Boccanegra'*. Mario Rinaldi's detailed study of 'Simon Boccanegra' makes high claims for the work: 'It is quite worthy to stand between "Aida" and "Otello."' And the writer makes frequent comparisons with 'Boris Godunov.' Its principal characteristics can be stated in a few words,' he sums up. 'Stylistic propriety of the various characters (above all, of the hero), perfect unity of action, ever-present personality of the great composer... The great Verdi is there all the time; his warm and inspired melodies, his broad and noble phrases, the musical repetitions always à propos, are concentrated upon this great drama which, complicated and unclear as it is, unfolds with a spaciousness equalled by few other dramas.... The first finale reveals the genius of a musician mature enough for contact with Shakespeare.'

GERALD ABRAHAM.

Musica d' oggi. Milan. August-September, 1934.

Antonio Moraini: *The Venice Biennial and the Music Festival*. Adriano Lualdi: *The International Music Festival*. Alfredo Cosella: *The Italian Share in the Third Venetian Music Festival*. A Procida: *Verdi's Requiem Mass*. Guido Pannain: *The Foreign Share in the Third International Music Festival*. Raffaello de Rensis: *Chamber Opera*. Aldo Finzi: 'Così fan tutte' and 'The Woman without a Shadow' at the Venice Festival. Pannain, in his discussion of the British contribution to last year's Venice Festival, devotes all his space to Constant Lambert. 'He is caught between two currents in contemporary musical life: jazz which fascinates him by its timbres and rhythms, and the taste for those dry and astringent forms in which the extremely new is mixed with the extremely old. At bottom he is a descendant of Stravinsky to whose school he seems to have gone, and where he has acquired a predilection for cutting harmonies and for the use of wind and percussion.'

October.

Mario Pilati: *The Third Musical Festival of the Venice Biennial*. Pilati's account of the Festival occupies the whole number, with the exception of the usual reviews, news paragraphs, etc.

November.

Gaetano Cesari (obituary). G. F. Ghedini: *New compositions by Ottorino Respighi*. G. Fara: *S.O.S. for an Italian History of Music and an Instrumental Museum*. Paolo Dotto: *Nicola Antonio Porpora*. Ghedini's article on Respighi is concerned principally with

the 'Concerto a cinque' written in 1933. He finds in it 'all his best characteristics with strong tendencies, at the same time, to more obvious freedom of form.' The problem of the contrasting of five solo instruments—oboe, trumpet, violin, double bass and piano—with an orchestra of strings only, is solved by the invention of 'combinations of the greatest interest to the musician and ordinary listener alike.'

January, 1935.

G. De Napoli: *The Italian Opera Centenaries of 1935*. L. Neretti: *From the Papers of a Celebrated Tenor (Napoleone Moriani)*. Jules Cloretie: *A Rehearsal of 'Don Carlos' with Verdi*. Cloretie's article (reprinted from the Paris *Gazette musicale* of February 24, 1867) gives a vivid picture of Verdi now sitting silent and immobile, now springing into sudden life, nodding with approval at the march in Act III ('performed with new metal instruments constructed by Sax').

February.

M. Rinaldi: *Young Roman Musicians (II. Giovanni Salviucci)*. G. G. Bernardi: *Contribution to the Study of the Comic Element in Venetian Serious Opera of the 17th Century*. Giovanni Salviucci first attracted attention in March, 1933, when Molinovi conducted his Overture in C sharp minor at the Augusteo. He is a pupil of Casella and Respighi, deeply serious and unusually self-critical. The Overture was his first important work; since then he has produced a String Quartet, a Chamber Symphony, an 'Italian Symphony,' and an 'Introduction, Passacaglia and Finale.' Rinaldi, though by no means uncritical, makes high claims for these works.

March.

M. Bellucci-La Salandra: *Domenico Sarri (1679-1744): Chronological Catalogue of his Works*. G. Bignami: *For an Instrumental Museum*. B. Lupo: *New Music for Voice and Piano by M. Castelnuovo-Tedesco*. Castelnuovo-Tedesco has had the ghastly idea of wedding three madrigals of Petrarch to the music of three of Chopin's preludes. 'The melody, worked out by Castelnuovo, is a sort of spontaneous derivation from the piano part.' Bettina Lupo, who takes these atrocities seriously, also discusses two other Petrarch settings of Castelnuovo's, a couple of sonnets (the second set rather in the manner of Tuscan folk-song), and two Spanish songs (*Dos Romances Viejos*).

April.

M. Bellucci-La Salandra: *Domenico Sarri: Chronological Catalogue* (concluded). A. Procida: *Francesco Santoliquido*. A. Domenini: *An Unpublished Letter of Ponchielli's*. Santoliquido, long resident in Tunisia, now living at Anacapri, made a brief appearance in English concert programmes shortly after the War, gave us a vague impression that he was a weak Debussyist with oriental predilections, and disappeared from our ken. Antonino Procida's article makes one wonder whether that superficial impression was, after all, unfair. A composer whose piano pieces have won enthusiastic tributes from

Giesecking, and who also numbers Furtwängler, Bruno Walter, Albert Coates and André Gide among his warm admirers, is not to be lightly dismissed.

GERALD ABRAHAM.

Sovetskaya Musika. Moscow. January, 1935.

Almost a Ukrainian number. There are articles on 'Musical Education in the Ukraine since the Revolution' and on two prominent Ukrainian composers, Revutsky and Lyatoshinsky, both pupils of Reinhold Glière. Lyatoshinsky himself writes on Revutsky's Second Symphony, a pleasant, not very individual work based on folk-melodies, while his own output as a whole is discussed by Igor Belza. Lyatoshinsky, in spite of his Scriabinism, is apparently a man to be reckoned with. (He is related to the well-known historian of the same name.) The same number contains an interesting survey of 'The Historical Development of Melodrama' by A. Glumov, and a sound, well-documented study of the historical evolution of keyboard-writing, by that fine scholar, K. Kuznetsov, who does justice to our own Elizabethans. Modern English music also gets its turn in a clear, succinct survey by Calvocoressi.

February.

A number devoted to children's music—the musical education of the young, the musical tastes and interests of children, children's songs, and so on. A large number of composers, educationists and critics state their views. But the question is usually considered from the point of view of party-propaganda, rather than that of music pure and simple. 75 to 80 per cent. of the teaching material in schools consists of revolutionary songs; the classics—Russian and western—are drawn on very little, folk-song hardly at all. Our own musical educationists would be sadly bewildered if transplanted to this 'brave, new world.'

La Revue Musicale. Paris. February.

Adolphe Boschot: *Mozart et ses premières grandes œuvres.* Maurice Dauge: *Essai sur la vocalise.* A. Dandelot: *La critique et 'Faust' de Gounod.* André Suarès: *Pensées sur la musique.* The article on Mozart is taken from a new book, soon to appear, by M. Boschot whose new translation of 'Don Juan,' made according to the original MS., appeared last year. The article on vocalise traces its history from ancient times to the present. The author might have made a clearer distinction between vocalise and coloratura. He discusses both, but their æsthetic differences are at least as important as their superficial musical similarities. Included in this number are some hitherto unpublished letters from Gounod. These date from the period when he was organist of the 'Missions Etrangères' in the Rue du Bac, Paris, at which time he was studying theology with the evident intention of entering the Church.

March.

Paul Collaer and J. Weterings: *Une nouvelle œuvre d'Alban Berg.* Norbert Dufourcq: *Les jeux de l'orgue français de la renaissance.* Kathi Meyer: *Un ballet à Cassel au 17-ième siècle.* The new Berg

work is 'Lulu.' It is the suite heard here earlier in the year which is described, not the complete opera. The ballet performed at Cassel in 1853 is entitled 'Die triumphierende Liebe umgeben von den sieghaften Tugenden.' According to the writer of article this work is of French origin. Included in this number are some letters from Berlioz dealing with arrangements for a performance in Strasburg of 'L'enfance du Christ' in 1868.

May.

Roger Allard: *Bellini*. Ildebrando Pizzetti: *Hommage à Bellini*. Guido Pannain: *La Norma*. Domenico de Paoli: *Bellini, musicien dramatique*. Henri de Saussine: *Sur Bellini, harmoniste*. Frederik Goldbeck: *Notes sur un album oublié*. Henry Prunières: *Bellini, épiautolier*. José Bruyl: *En parlant de Bellini*. Arthur Hoerðe: *Un film sur Bellini*. Luigi Colacicchi: *Reprise du 'Pirata' à Rome*. Henry Prunières: 'Orseolo' d'Ildebrando Pizzetti. This special Bellini number is prefaced by a laudatory poem by Gabriele d'Annunzio (dated 1901) and ends with the reminiscences of the prima-donna Emmy Nevada whose 'Sonnambula' aroused Bellini's friend Florimo to such fervour many years ago in Naples. Between these come a series of admirable articles, chiefly biographical. There appears to be little that can be said of the music itself other than has already been discussed in the text books. A reconsideration of Bellini's works tends to suggest the unlikelihood of any return to popular esteem.

Revue de Musicologie. Paris. November. 1934.

Henryk Opienski: *La symphonie polonaise au XVIII^e siècle*. Paul Marie Masson: *Les 'Chants anacréontiques' de Méhul (II)*. Lionel de la Laurencie: *Les débuts de la musique de chambre en France (IV)*. The short article on Polish music contains news of a library in the Cistercian monastery at Obra in Poland which appears to have a noteworthy collection of MSS.

February, 1935.

Y. Lacroix-Novaro: *La Carole*. Gitta Horn: *La note pointée dans les œuvres pour clavecin de J. S. Bach*. M. L. Pereyra: *Franz Beck (II)*. The 'carole' is, or was, a dance. This exhaustive article traces the etymology of the name which is particularly rich in suggestive allusions, and discusses the significance of the dance with special reference to its underlying magical attributes.

Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft. Leipzig. November, 1934.

Hellmuth Lungerhausen: *Zur instrumentalen Kolorierungspraxis des 18. Jahrhunderts*. Hans Neemann: *Laute und Theorbe als Generalbass-instrumente im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*. Georg Schünemann: *Ein Bildnis Bartolomeo Cristoforis*. Albert Wellek: *Die Aufspaltung der 'Tonhöhe' in der Hornbostelschen Gehörpsychologie u. die Konsonanz-theorien von Hornbostel u. Krueger*. The chief

exhibit of the first article above is a violin concerto in E minor by Graun which, in common with those in B minor, C (major) and A major, has '*eine kolorierte Prinzipalstimme*' written in with the ordinary solo part. In the article on Continuo use is made of a treatise in Italian by Erecole Bottrigari entitled 'Il Desiderio, overro de' concerti di vari stromenti musicali' dating from 1594 which furnishes details of the constitution of the contemporary orchestra.

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Mitteilungen der Schweiz. Musikforschenden Gesellschaft. Zurich.
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Music Vanguard. New York. March-April.

The first number of an American bi-monthly to which we wish success. The manifesto that starts the number says that the periodical is addressed 'at once toward the two extremes of the music field . . . and toward the middle of it.' By that is meant that on the one hand the professional musician, on the other, the professional musicologist are to be catered for, as well as 'the great, but comparatively musicless masses of the English-speaking countries.' In the present issue the field is covered by an article on *Negro Songs of Protest* by Lawrence Gellert, one entitled 'Preface to all linguistic treatment of music' by Charles Seeger (the musicologist's section) and for the third group of readers an interesting article by Hans Eisler, a pupil of Schönberg and now an exile, on the 'German workers' music movement from 1848.' A short note on 'Young composers' examines the present state of creative music in America. The writer is Aaron Copland.

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GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

Orchestral

COLUMBIA. Berlioz: *Symphonie Fantastique* (the Orchestre Symphonique of Paris conducted by Selmar Meyrowitz). That which gives this record its distinction is the sane, straightforward way in which the performance is carried through. It is an unusual and for the student a welcome case of highly romantic music treated with great regard for clarity of outline. There is warmth in the interpretation as well. The work would be unthinkable without it. But the approach seems to have been through a musicianly intelligence, in the first place, and the result is that the music comes cleanly through. For that and for the general excellence of the playing this record is especially commendable.

Berlioz: *Beatrice and Benedict Overture* (the L.P.O. conducted by Sir Hamilton Harty). This shorter work, extremely well played, is a suitable pendant to the above. In it accuracy is tempered with freedom in a highly satisfactory compromise. It makes good gramophone literature and at the same time offers a fine performance.

H.M.V. Chausson: *Symphony in B flat, op. 20* (Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, Paris, conducted by Piero Coppola). A dignified work, finely proportioned and thoughtfully constructed. With an English reader in view, one might say it was Stanfordian in manner of workmanship. It has something of Stanford's equable craftsmanship and something (a little less, perhaps) of his serious-minded playfulness and his deliberate use of the rhetorical. But it is chiefly in what is felt to be Chausson's attitude towards the symphony that it seems to English ears a shade Stanfordian. Otherwise it is pure French and in quality very near to Franck, the composer's teacher. The material lacks distinction, admirable though the workmanship may be. Melodically there is nothing that jars, never a trace of vulgarity, and also nothing that greatly moves the listener. Yet one would not miss hearing it and is proportionately glad to have this record which shows all the signs of being soundly prepared and well executed. There is an aloof feeling about the music, as though the composer were looking on at things from the windows of a fine house, content to do that rather than descend to the street and see things at closer range. There is still room for that kind of work and to sit with it is refreshing.

Schubert: *The Great C major Symphony* (the B.B.C. Orchestra conducted by Adrian Boult). The controlled, restrained, balanced statement of this record gives it its place among the best we know. There is no straining after effect, but all is easy and assured, with sufficient emphasis for vitality yet no accent out of place. One has heard more impassioned renderings, when the slow movement has pulsated with feeling and the last movement been whipped up into a tempest. Here that does not obtain. That is the only warning one need give. This record is for those who dare look music straight between the eyes.

Sibelius: *The string quartet, The sixth symphony*. The third volume of the Sibelius Society offers two very satisfactory performances. 'Voces intimae' is played by the Budapest String Quartet, the symphony in D minor by the Finnish National Orchestra conducted by Georg Schneevoigt. The string quartet is seldom played, a fact which its difficulty makes understandable, though one would think that the splendid, individual quality of the music would tempt players to try their hand at what must be fine stuff to work on. The symphony is the best orchestral recording of a work by Sibelius that one can recall. The work itself does little to meet the hearer half-way and it is in that respect that the gramophone can be of use in giving the opportunity of that repetition at will which otherwise nobody could come by. Gradually the symphony falls into place in the memory, the lines become clear and the concentration significant. Sibelius's thought has always had a certain abruptness and in this late symphony the ear is brought up sharp, time after time, against what seems to be incoherent reasoning. But that is not the whole truth, as the gramophone now can show us.

Chamber Music

COLUMBIA. Brahms: *Pianoforte quartet in C minor, op. 60* (Harry Cumpson, Cyril Towbin, David Dawson and Carl Stern). These four players make a good working ensemble and although they appear not to have decided on any specific title for their quartet they know each other's work well enough to turn out a thorough performance. Each seems a gifted player but their claim to recognition is that through individualities of warmth here, or emphasis there, the music itself comes to the hearer clean and clear.

Solo Performances

H.M.V. Beethoven: *Sonata for violin and pianoforte in A major, op. 47* (Yehudi and Hephzibah Menuhin). The very special circumstances of this case (the youth and early fruition of the players) cause one to expect, possibly to look for more acutely than otherwise, blemishes in the playing and inconsistencies in the interpretation. Frankly they are difficult to discover and the record remains extraordinarily pleasing as well as musically satisfying. The two players seem

to understand each other well. Manifestly they have arrived at a *modus operandi* that can take great music in its stride. The pianist sounds at moments a trifle assertive, or seems so in contrast to the unbroken suavity of the violin playing. Musical values apart, this record points to the fact that we must now begin to take more for granted in youthful prowess. The date at which your prodigy becomes mature is being placed ever earlier and what was once miraculous is now a usual occurrence. But still, the gifted young things of to-day are not yet all Menuhins.

Bach: *Organ Toccata in C major arranged for pianoforte by Busoni* (Arthur Rubinstein). If we have had occasion in the past to suggest that Arthur Rubinstein was but a pianist's pianist, a master of technique, of interest for that only, it is with the more pleasure that we recommend this record in which not only is the actual playing wholly admirable but thought has gone to the interpretation. The result is as we knew it would be, if only this gifted player could be persuaded to look farther into a piece of music than the mere notes. This record continues the improvement in interpretation shown some years ago in the recording of one of the Brahms pianoforte concertos.

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